the weekly Standard

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007 $3.95

Fred vs. Rudy
MATTHEW CONTINETTI
STEPHEN F. HAYES

AL QAEDA IN IRAQ

How to understand it. How to defeat it.

FREDERICK W. KAGAN

An Al Qaeda In Iraq member rips up a wanted poster for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Falluja, July 2004. Zarqawi was killed by U.S. forces in June 2006.

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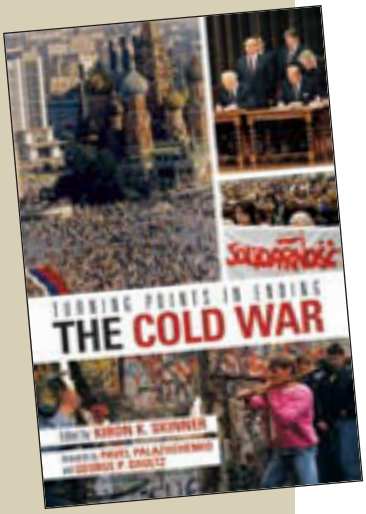

Turning Points in Ending the Cold War

EDITED BY KIRON K. SKINNER
FOREWORDS BY PAVAL PALAZHCHENKO AND GEORGE P. SHULTZ

Twenty-five years ago, in the early 1980s, no one could have imagined that only a decade later the cold war would be over. How did it happen? The essays in this collection offer illuminating insights into the key players— Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, and others—and the monumental events that led to the collapse of communism.

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The Strategy of Campaigning: Lessons from Ronald Reagan and Boris Yeltsin

KIRON K. SKINNER, SERHIY KUDELIA, BRUCE BUENO DE MESQUITA, AND CONDOLEEZZA RICE
FOREWORD BY GEORGE P. SHULTZ

"The Strategy of Campaigning *is fascinating and important. As personalities, Ronald Reagan and Boris Yeltsin could hardly be more different; the political systems they transformed were also at opposite ends of the political spectrum. Nevertheless, the story of how each went about changing his political environment provides important insights into today's much altered political world."*

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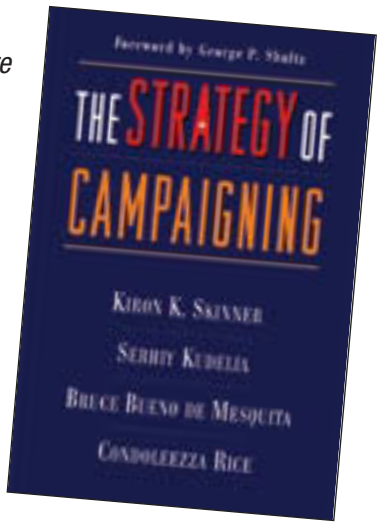

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Banned in Washington

The Scrapbook seldom takes notice one way or the other of "Opus," the strikingly unfunny comic strip written and drawn by Berkeley Breathed, of "Bloom County" fame. But the August 26 installment was missing from the pages of our *Washington Post*. And while this was not necessarily a calamity, we admit to curiosity about why "Opus" failed to appear in our Sunday paper.

As we soon discovered, both the August 26 and September 2 episodes of "Opus" poke fun—exceedingly mild fun, in our view—at Islamic fundamentalists. (The August 26 strip is reprinted below.)

Well, here's a chance for readers to pretend they're editors at the *Washington Post*. Bearing in mind that "Opus" featured a strip, two weeks ago, which wondered whether the late Rev. Jerry Falwell is in heaven (he is, but God is "annoyed . . . eternally" about it), imagine you now find yourself staring at the new installment, wherein the spiritual quester Lola Granola (a recurring "Opus" character) tries to persuade her boyfriend of the advantages of her embrace of radical Islamism: "You're not getting a girlfriend blathering about 'American Idol.' And you're not getting a girlfriend who resists a man's rightful place." And so on.

What to do? Well, according to Catherine Donaldson-Evans of Fox News, *Post* editors showed the strip to Muslim staffers at the paper, who reacted "emotionally" to the spectacle of Lola Granola, now styling herself "Fatima Struggle" and "dressed in traditional Muslim garb and espousing conservative Islamic views." And this strip and the one scheduled for September 2 were pulled from the *Washington Post*.

In The Scrapbook's considered opinion, the insult to Islam in this strip is pretty benign, and in its fear of giving offense, the *Post* overreacted. But that's not the point. The point is, why would editors have felt constrained to solicit the views of Muslim staffers?

Were all the Baptists in the *Post* newsroom consulted about the Jerry Falwell joke? Is "Doonesbury" shown in advance to all the Republicans in the *Post* newsroom? Oh, wait a minute . . . ♦

Washington Post Writers Group

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of February 2, 1998)

Hollywood Hates the Troops

"We've killed over 400,000 of their citizens." That's what actor Tim Robbins thinks U.S. troops have been doing in Iraq. He made the claim last week in an appearance on HBO's *Real Time with Bill Maher*.

He's wrong, of course. American soldiers have not been slaughtering 300 Iraqis a day for the last four years. Even for one of Hollywood's most feculent personalities, this is an appalling slander of U.S. troops.

The Iraq Body Count is an antiwar website that tallies all civilian deaths in Iraq as reported in the news media. Theirs is a comprehensive count that seeks to hold the United States and Britain accountable for a wide range of civilian deaths. As explained at iraqbodycount.org: "The count includes civilian deaths caused by coalition military action and by military or paramilitary responses to the coalition presence (e.g. insurgent and terrorist attacks). It also includes excess civilian deaths caused by criminal action resulting from the breakdown in law and order which followed the coalition invasion."

The antiwar group's "maximum count"? At the moment, 77,555. That's one-fifth the number concocted by Robbins's overactive imagination.

Just as we were inclined to dismiss Robbins as a lonely voice of idiocy, news came of director Brian De Palma's *Redacted*, one of eight new movies about the Iraq war due out in the coming months, according to Reuters. "Inspired by one of the most serious crimes committed by American soldiers in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, it is a harrowing indictment of the conflict and spares the audience no brutality to get its message across."

The film is based on the story of a brutal rape and murder of a young Iraqi girl and the killing of her family at the hands of four American soldiers. Sgt. Paul Cortez, who has admitted his role in the attack, was sentenced earlier this year to 100 years in prison. Most Americans who read about this brutal crime probably understood that most soldiers don't behave this way. De Palma does not. "The movie is an attempt to bring the reality of what is happening in Iraq to the American people," he said last week.

How about the reality of what's happening in Hollywood? Says Pete Hegseth of Vets for Freedom: "These statements reflect the utter ignorance of Robbins and De Palma about what American soldiers are actually doing in Iraq. At every opportunity, they use their celebrity status to bash the very soldiers and Marines who are fighting for them. They reflexively side with radical Islamic terrorists rather than take an honest look at the situation in Iraq." ♦

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Casual

THIS SPORTING LIFE

Last month, after weeks of frustrating inactivity occasioned by an ankle injury, David Beckham finally made his debut in Major League Soccer. The owner of the most famous foot in sports, the head that launched a thousand haircuts, the talented half of one of the world's most recognizable couples, was at last ready to inject American soccer with its largest dose of charisma and celebrity since Pelé landed in New York more than 30 years ago.

For an Englishman like me, a lifelong soccer fan who has literally shed tears of joy and grief over the vicissitudes of my local and national teams through the decades, it should have been a big day. It marked an almost sacramental fusing of my English heritage and my modern American acculturation in the last ten years—in the happy crucible of a sports stadium.

What's more, it was going to happen in Washington, a few miles from my home, where D.C. United would host Beckham's L.A. Galaxy.

So what did I find myself doing that evening when English soccer's brightest star was going to be in my neighborhood? I drove 40 miles to see a baseball game. And not much of a baseball game, either, to be honest. As crowds of excited Americans tailgated at RFK Stadium, I hotfooted it up I-95 to Baltimore to see the comically inept Baltimore Orioles host the Seattle Mariners.

Why? There was no coercion involved. This was not some curious assignment in self-abnegation. I *chose* to go. I actually wanted to go and see a largely meaningless professional baseball game rather than the biggest soccer event in recent American history. It was only later, as I dozed while watching the highlights of Beckham's first game, that I fully appreciated what my choice that evening betokened.

That night marked a rite of passage for me, a sort of severing of ties with my homeland. If I had reached the point where I'd rather watch baseball nonentities (sorry, Erik Bedard) than a soccer megastar, could I ever go home again?

DARREN GYGI

Not that I didn't embrace American sports long ago.

To be honest, and I say this sheepishly to the baseball fans out there, football was and remains my first love. I first lived in New York in the late 1980s and became caught up in the excitement of the Giants—Phil Simms and Lawrence Taylor, Mark Bavaro and Carl Banks, the Bill Parcells team that won two Super Bowls in the space of four years.

Michael Vick's savagery may have tarnished the game for some, but I can wax ever more lyrical on the deeper appeal of the game. I can repeat the line I first heard years ago from a similarly Americophile Englishman that football was like a cross between chess and rugby. I can tell you how it serves as an animated metaphor for America itself: the melding of Hobbes and Locke on the field of play—the brutest of force mediated by the most complex of regulations that only a nation in thrall to the law could ever devise.

Yes, football came first for me, but it wasn't all that long before other American pastimes impinged on my consciousness. Over the years, as I learned to live without football in those endless months from February to September, I discovered baseball. It looked vaguely familiar. Though I had grown up playing cricket at my English school, I had occasionally glimpsed a game on other fields, like baseball, called rounders. It was played by girls, which meant it was viewed with contempt by boys until we reached a certain age, when the sight of teenage females in short skirts and tight T-shirts suddenly became a spectacle worth lingering over.

Like rounders, but for very different reasons then, baseball began to grow on me. The games lacked the urgency of football—with ten times as many in the regular season, there didn't seem to be much at stake in any one event. But over time the sport—the graceful arc of a contest sweeping through nine innings, the spectacle of a full baseball stadium in a late summer light, and the data—the ERAs and on-base percentages—became an addiction for me.

I won't, I really won't, become a full convert to American sports. Basketball has mostly passed me by, and I don't think I could tell you the name of a single current hockey player. Nor will I completely abandon my affiliation with English soccer.

But on Thursday, thanks to a fine sports editor back in London, and the attention of a few like-minded readers of my newspaper, I'll be in Indianapolis to watch the Colts kick off the new season. If David Beckham showed up, I wouldn't even notice.

GERARD BAKER

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Food Fight

Victorino Matus's exploration of the cult of celebrity chefs ("Bam!" August 20 / August 27) deftly describes the decline in the number of cookbooks being published, which has been brought on by the availability of recipes for free on the web. It is even more disheartening that the gastro-celebs who actually get published now are receiving outrageous sums for books that they sometimes have nearly nothing to do with. On one hand (as a trained chef as well as food editor), I applaud Rachael Ray for getting her viewers back into the kitchen and interested in food again; using frozen onions is better than running out to the local fast food establishment. At the same time, I agree with chef Anthony Bourdain's quest for real food that hearkens back to the days of Child and Pépin, but the majority of the Food Network viewership just isn't going to "get" that.

When Johnny Carson went off the air, he was replaced by the Food Network; Rachael and Emeril and Giada are there neither to impart culinary wisdom nor their Nonna's recipes—they are there for strict entertainment value.

This is yet another nail in the coffin of the "family around the hearth" ideal; when that tradition is bolstered, however, a return to serious cookbook publishing and serious home cooking will happen as well. Until then, there's always the used bookstore.

Elissa Altman
Newtown, Conn.

Potter the Pious

Lisa Schiffren's review of the seventh and final installment of the *Harry Potter* books ("Magic Alert," August 13) made me wonder why some conservative Christians have consistently denounced the fantasy world J.K. Rowling created as Satanic and occult. If the series is a "traditional struggle between good and evil, freedom and slavery, love and death" as Schiffren describes it, it is puzzling why some Christians have condemned the books over the past decade. Shouldn't they instead embrace these "pro-life, pro-family, anti-cult-of-death" books?

C.S. Lewis, with his beloved Narnia chronicles, and J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, both created fantasy worlds imbued with magic, wizards, and similar elements employed by Rowling. Lewis's and Tolkien's books are revered by many Christians as Christian allegories, while Rowling's have earned vituperative denunciations from many of the same people.

This is odd, since it appears that the Potter series celebrates both the caring and vigorous virtues of which Gertrude Himmelfarb has written. Friendship, compassion, and love are demonstrated along with courage, bravery, and honor. Certainly any children, Christians included, could read much worse than books that deal with themes such as these.

Jason Schlabach
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dept. of Injustice

Edward Blum's "The Justice Dept. Run Amok" (August 6) reveals that the citizens of Port Chester, N.Y., are being abused by the Justice Department, which is effectively forcing the city to gerrymander one or more of its voting districts to assure the election of a Hispanic selectman.

Compounding the injustice to Port Chesterites is the government's selective enforcement of the law, which has led the DOJ to demand elections favoring the same, mostly Hispanic, illegal immigrants whom the government has failed to expel from this country.

After the government gets around to enforcing immigration laws, perhaps then it can reassess whether or not the legal Hispanic population of Port Chester has been disenfranchised. Until then, Americans from coast to coast should demand that the government simply do its job and cease trying to pick the victors of every local election.

Vance P. Frickey
Denver, Colo.

• • •

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Kill the Die-in

On August 19, the *New York Times* published an op-ed by seven enlisted soldiers critical of the Iraq war. At midnight on August 24, THE WEEKLY STANDARD posted on our website a response by seven Iraq vets. The *Times* had rejected the vets' response.

The piece carried the straightforward headline "Iraq Vets Respond . . . to the *New York Times* seven." It was a sober rejoinder to the arguments in the *Times* op-ed. It suggested the antiwar soldiers' analysis was incomplete and "misguided." The vets emphasized, "We understand the frustration our fellow soldiers feel. All of us were in Iraq before the 'surge' and lament never seeing a coherent, security-based counterinsurgency strategy. In truth, we were only clearing—not holding." But, the vets argued, "We also know what's possible when even small portions of counterinsurgency strategy are applied. . . . It's unfortunate that soldiers in the 82nd Airborne have not yet benefited from the new strategy, but it will ensure that their actions, and those of their fallen brethren, will not have been in vain."

And the vets concluded, "Meanwhile, we applaud our brothers in the 82nd Airborne for their courage under fire, thank them for their commitment to our nation, and pray for the recovery of their injured coauthor."

At 10:21 that morning, Joe Klein of *Time* posted the following on his blog, under the headline "Heroes Trashed":

> Well, I suppose it was inevitable that THE WEEKLY STANDARD would figure out some way to trash the 7 enlisted men from the 82nd Airborne, who wrote the courageous Op-Ed piece about the unreliability of our Iraqi allies in the *New York Times* last Sunday. At least the piece is written by other Iraq war vets and the tone is respectful . . . although the neocons continue to try to use Anbar, an all-Sunni province, as an avatar of what will happen in the rest of Iraq, which is utter nonsense.
>
> But where on earth are the Democratic politicians on this? Why haven't they embraced the grunts from the 82nd the way the Republicans have embraced the "liberal" Brookings scholars? It's just very frustrating and truly outrageous.

Now Joe Klein prides himself—quite often, in print—on being different from nutty, hysterical, suffering-from-Bush-derangement-syndrome left-wing bloggers. But here he is exhibiting nutty, hysterical, Bush-derangement syndrome himself. After all, how had THE WEEKLY STANDARD "trashed" the seven enlisted men? By publishing a substantive op-ed that called no one's motives into question, that expressed good will to the seven antiwar soldiers—and whose tone Klein himself called "respectful"?

It would be silly to make too much out of one item on a *Time* blog. But it does suggest that even the respectable elements of the antiwar movement have jumped the shark. Unwilling seriously to debate the choices before us, and the consequences of those choices, antiwar advocates are now down to name-calling.

Meanwhile, a motley crew of antiwar groups, including Iraq Veterans Against The War, CODEPINK, ANSWER, and MoveOn.org, are organizing a week of demonstrations in Washington beginning September 15. The "mobilization" will be kicked off with a "Die-In," sponsored primarily by ANSWER and Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). As they explain, "IVAW is asking that participants in the Die-In/Funeral select the name of one of the almost 4,000 soldiers who have been killed in Iraq. You can select a family member, friend or someone from your city, town or state. Please bring a photograph of that person and a sign with his/her name on September 15." Needless to say, the protesters who will be appropriating the names of soldiers and Marines killed in action have no intention of asking the permission of their families. But why should the families think their loved ones' sacrifices are being exploited in an unbelievably offensive way? After all, as one organizer explains, "The die-in will be led by an Honor Guard of Iraq Veterans Against the War who will simulate a 21-Gun Salute before taps is played to initiate the die-in."

Grotesque.

Will mainstream antiwar groups and antiwar politicians denounce this action, which is scheduled to begin the weeklong protest? Will the respectable parts of the antiwar movement stand with veterans and veterans' families who intend to protest this disgusting appropriation of their loved ones' names? Surely most critics of the war still have a sense of decency.

—*William Kristol*

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Sustaining the Surge

Bush has more options than people think.

BY THOMAS DONNELLY & GARY SCHMITT

When General David Petraeus reports to Washington next week, the most important question he'll have to answer is, What happens in Iraq after the surge? With all but the most die-hard defeatists—that is, the congressional Democratic leadership—convinced that the surge has improved the security situation in Iraq, there seems ever less chance that Congress will force an American withdrawal. Instead, the war will continue through at least the remainder of the Bush presidency.

As a result, U.S. policy in Iraq will enter into an extended "post-surge" period. The surge brigades began to arrive in Iraq in January. Therefore, around April the arithmetic of the Army's 15-month rotation policy will begin to kick in. And as NBC's Tim Russert stated on *Meet the Press* on August 26, "We do not have the capacity to continue the surge because of the strain on our military." Or so the conventional wisdom in Washington goes.

But is it true? The fact is, even our overstretched U.S. land forces are capable of continuing the surge without extending the tour of units currently in Iraq beyond 15 months. As Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, deputy commander in Iraq, pointed out in a news conference earlier this month, the current surge can be pushed until next August. And there are a number of ways to sustain a larger force even longer. To begin with, Marine rotations for combat forces, now seven months long, could be extended. Additional forces are also available from the Army National Guard. Six full Army National Guard brigades have been on alert since July in anticipation of deployment in 2008; their deployment could be accelerated. To be sure, there would be questions about the wisdom of such decisions, but it is simply not the case that the capacity to extend the surge doesn't exist.

If General Petraeus wanted to extend the surge in Iraq at its present force level of 165,000, there are enough soldiers and Marines to take it through this time next year and possibly longer. Of course, the real question is, Should he request this? The answer is not simply a matter of stress on the force, but the strategic value of the potential gains in Iraq. And one clear fact worth considering is that the Petraeus surge has regained the initiative that was slowly and painfully lost from 2003 to 2006.

Militarily, the surge has three goals. The first is to drive a wedge between Al Qaeda In Iraq and the Sunni population. Though not complete, that effort has succeeded more rapidly and more decisively than anyone imagined to be possible, as the "Anbar Awakening" and similar movements have taken hold.

The second is to drive a similar wedge between the Shia extremists, particularly those in the Jaysh al-Mahdi militia of Moktada al-Sadr, and the broader Iraqi Shia community. There is now clear progress on that front, too; whatever Sadr means by his order to "suspend" Jaysh al-Mahdi actions for six months, it's not a message of strength.

A third goal of the surge is to limit the influence of outside powers, especially Iran. This is where maintaining or increasing troop strength is crucial. The main lines for Iranian infiltration and supply are relatively few, but they pass through areas of Iraq, particularly south of Baghdad, where coalition forces have long been few and inactive. Only now is this problem being attacked seriously, not only by U.S. forces, but also, for example, by the newly deployed troops from the Republic of Georgia and, most crucially, by Iraqi army units.

This last point is yet another reason to reinforce success: The Petraeus surge is responsible for galvanizing the partnership between American and Iraqi units and a surge in Iraqi combat capabilities. Yes, there's a long way to go before "Iraqification" is complete, but as the recent National Intelligence Estimate reported, Iraqi security forces "involved in combined operations with Coalition forces have performed adequately, and some units have demonstrated increasing professional competence." The reason for the improvement is that Iraqi units are paired with American units.

All in all, then, there's a strong argument for building on these advances. At times—in fact, most of the time—commentators and politicians alike forget that the full complement of the surge has only been in place since July. And, even more important, it has been less than a year since the new counterinsurgency strategy that the surge was intended to support began to be implemented. Even so, the progress on the ground is palpable to both the U.S. soldiers in the field and the Iraqis. The question has to be asked: Wouldn't it be worth "banking" even more success in Iraq while the momentum is on our side? Having a margin of safety in numbers and capabilities in any war—be it conventional or not—is hardly something a commander or, for that matter, a commander in chief should forsake if it is possible to do otherwise.

By all accounts, General Petraeus will not be asking for additional troops. Even so, the end of the surge cycle won't mean a precipitous decline in U.S. force levels. General

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George Casey, the Army chief of staff and Petraeus's predecessor in Iraq, recently suggested to the *Wall Street Journal* that, over the next year, 6 of the 21 brigades now deployed may be withdrawn. That's a return to the pre-surge level of about 135,000 troops. While the press insists upon portraying Casey and the rest of the general officer corps as unreconstructed surge opponents, the fact is that his numbers reduce the strain on the force "without significantly reducing the force level [that President] Bush and General Petraeus want to keep." When the Joint Chiefs of Staff offer a range of troop-level options for Iraq, they're simply doing what they're paid to do: offer professional risk assessments. When Casey declares that the Army is "unbalanced," he's right—the force is too small to meet its worldwide requirements. But the way to rebalance the Army is not to declare defeat in Iraq but to increase the size of U.S. land forces.

Until then—and President Bush ought to bring the same sense of urgency to the task of expanding the force as he does to fighting the war—the Army appears committed to doing what needs to be done to support Petraeus. Indeed, we are well into unit rotations that will keep force levels up even as the surge comes to an end: The 101st Airborne Division is in the midst of a deployment that should last until the end of 2008, followed by the 1st Armored and the 4th Infantry divisions, and ultimately the headquarters of the XVIII Airborne Corps as the lead ground command. The I Marine Expeditionary Force is slated to replace the II MEF in Multi-National Force-West.

Petraeus's bet is that a force of that size will be sufficient, although probably just sufficient, for expanding the counterinsurgency effort of "clear, control, and retain" in other areas of Iraq. Given the results of the surge thus far, it will be hard to gainsay his judgment—especially for Democrats in Congress. But rather than meeting Petraeus's minimum needs, we should be seeking ways to maximize his chances of success. ♦

Clearing the Decks

The new GOP formula: purge and elect.

BY FRED BARNES

Republicans are so intent on pushing scandal-plagued members of Congress out of office and far from the media spotlight that the entire party—from the White House to congressional leaders to the Republican National Committee to various campaign committees—was instantly united last week in the effort to force Senator Larry Craig of Idaho to resign.

At another time, Republicans might have cut Craig some slack, allowing him to finish his term and not seek reelection. But after suffering crushing losses in last year's midterm election—spurred in part by highly publicized GOP corruption in Congress—Republicans are not in a mood to tolerate another nasty scandal. The common expression among leaders is that they must "clean house."

They were already doing so when the story broke last week of Craig's arrest and subsequent guilty plea for disorderly conduct in an airport men's room notorious as a spot for anonymous gay sex. House Republicans had quietly coaxed Rep. Rick Renzi of Arizona into announcing his retirement next year. And with at least one more forced retirement expected, the corruption issue was being taken care of, belatedly but decisively.

But the Craig case suddenly overshadowed the house-cleaning drive. His arrest had "global implications," a Bush administration official says, because everyone has heard of it and knows the sordid details. Within hours of the disclosure of his arrest, Republicans decided Craig must go. Rarely have Republican leaders acted so swiftly as they did in sending the matter to the Senate Ethics Committee and stripping Craig of his seniority and ranking position on committees.

That was accompanied by calls for his resignation by John McCain and Norm Coleman and the promise that more of their Senate colleagues would follow suit in drumbeat fashion. In an unprecedented move, the national committee was prepared to urge Craig's immediate ouster. The message was clear.

The White House got involved, too. Presidential aides checked with leaders of the Bush reelection campaign in Idaho in 2004 and with Republican officials. They found no support for Craig, only a strong feeling that he should resign his seat immediately. For Craig, the string had run out, in Idaho as well as Washington. Republicans are confident they can hold the Idaho seat in 2008.

What made the Craig case all the worse was its echo of the Mark Foley scandal that sideswiped Republicans a month before the 2006 election. After the Florida congressman's lewd emails with teenage Capitol pages were revealed, Republican House candidates across the country saw their poll numbers drop as much as 10 points. That all but assured Republicans would lose control of the House.

Republicans are desperate not to have another corruption-driven defeat in 2008. So when House Republican leader John Boehner, whip Roy Blunt, and others in the hierarchy met in a private retreat outside Washington last December, the corruption issue headed

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GARY LOCKE

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their agenda. They adopted a zero tolerance policy. They want no House candidates with corruption problems on the ballot. In 2006, four House members resigned (two later went to jail).

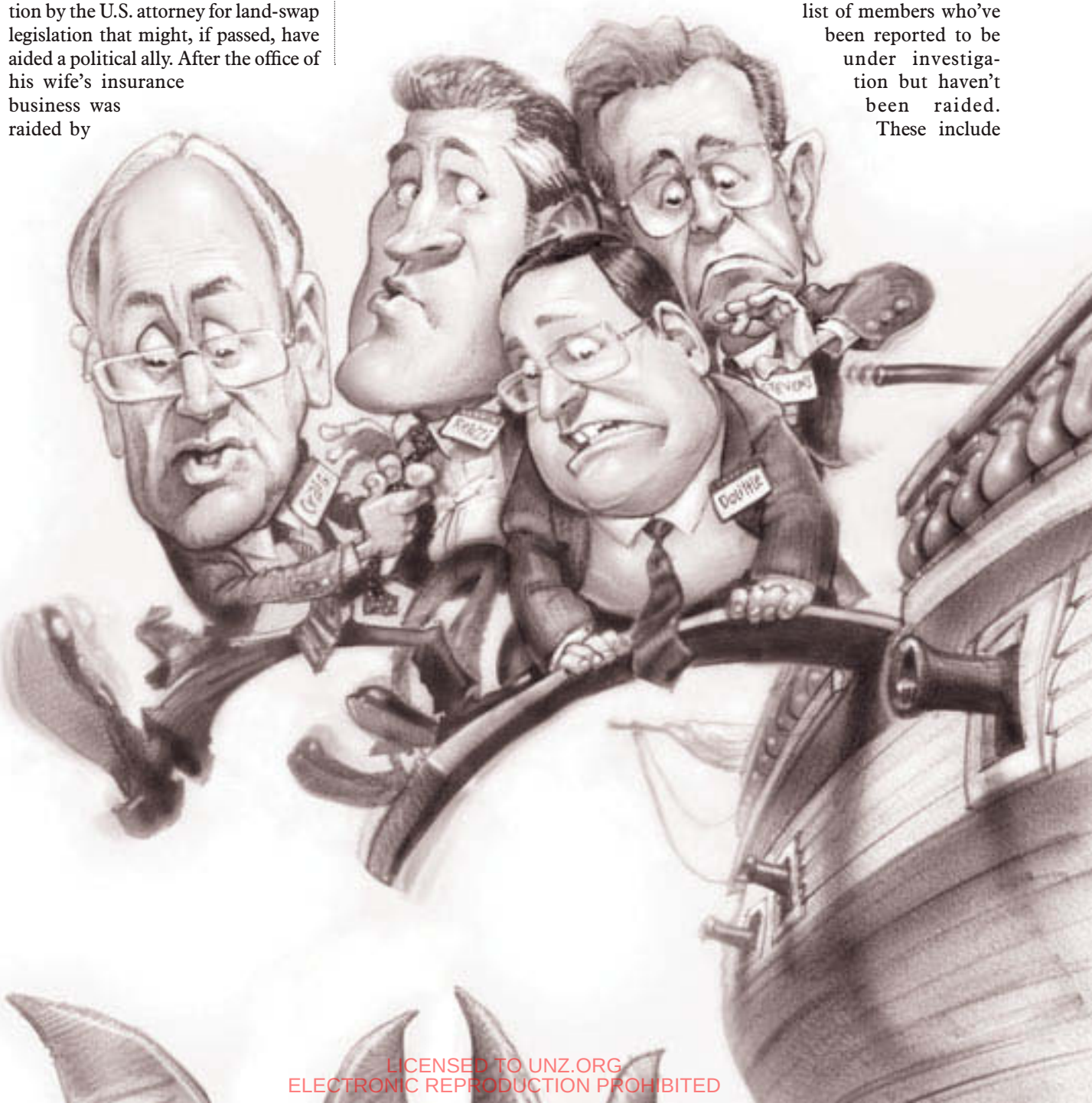
Boehner came up with a vague phrase for the sort of scandal they had in mind. It's one with "a clear indication of serious transgressions." In Boehner's mind, an FBI raid on your home or your wife's office is such an indication.

Arizona's Renzi is under investigation by the U.S. attorney for land-swap legislation that might, if passed, have aided a political ally. After the office of his wife's insurance business was raided by the FBI, he gave up his post on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. That wasn't enough. Under pressure from Republican leaders, he announced his retirement in 2008.

An FBI raid on the Virginia home of Rep. John Doolittle of California has put him on the pariah list. He and his wife have ties to disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff, among other problems. Former supporters and financial backers have begun announcing (with the tacit approval of Republican leaders) their desire for him to retire.

If all else fails, the ultimate tool to force a retirement or resignation is to inform the House member or senator that the national party will provide no campaign funds and perhaps even will finance a primary opponent. This tactic was used against Craig, along with the threat that Senate Republican leaders would, publicly and noisily, demand he resign.

In the House, Republicans have an informal watch list of members who've been reported to be under investigation but haven't been raided. These include



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Gary Miller of California and Don Young of Alaska, both in trouble over earmarks that aided backers or business associates.

Boehner has vowed to "act swiftly and decisively" to push corruption-tainted Republicans out of office. Things are less clear in the clubby atmosphere of the Senate. While Republicans quickly moved against Craig, they have held back from taking action against Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska.

Stevens is renowned for splurging on earmarks. And it's because of them that his home was raided by a joint IRS and FBI team on July 30. Many friends and ex-aides appear to have benefited from his earmarks, either directly or indirectly. But unlike Craig, Stevens hasn't been charged with any wrongdoing or pleaded guilty. Republican officials say this explains the hands-off approach.

Stevens is running for his eighth term next year, and he's a strong favorite to win. But he's no longer unassailable in Alaska. A poll last month found his positive rating had dipped to 44 percent. And in a hypothetical Senate primary, he trailed popular governor Sarah Palin by 23 points.

In Idaho, Craig's last cry for help was a request to Governor "Butch" Otter and the other Idaho senator, Mike Crapo, to speak out about how much he'd done for the state over the years. They declined. And Craig was toast. ♦

The Vulnerable Frontrunner

Giuliani confronts the primary calendar.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

The scene was the headquarters of GT Solar Technologies in Merrimack, New Hampshire. It was August 17, and former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani—the current frontrunner for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination—was taking questions from a small audience. A woman with short brown hair said she didn't understand how being "on offense" in the war on terrorism "means having 3,500 of our troops being killed in Iraq and Afghanistan." She said she didn't understand "that way of thinking." "We're not accomplishing anything," she said. "And we know that."

A typical pol might have dodged the woman's comment and moved on to his stump speech. Not Giuliani. He not only tackled the question—he also took on the questioner. "I would say just the opposite," Giuliani said. "I would say we know that we're accomplishing things. But I would not tell our troops in Iraq that they're not accomplishing anything. I think that's a terrible thing to do."

The woman tried to interrupt.

"No, no, no," Giuliani went on. "You got to let me finish the answer now. You asked the question, let me finish the answer. You might not like the answer, but you got to let me finish it. I think it's a mistake, both substantively and emotionally, both, to tell our troops that they're accomplishing nothing in Iraq—and a very serious overstatement. Which I think comes from, in a large way, the way in which the media covers it. I think they"—the troops—"have accomplished a great deal in Iraq." American troops deposed Saddam Hussein, "who was a major pillar of support for Islamic terrorism," Giuliani said. The victory in Iraq helped convince Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi to give up his weapons of mass destruction and terrorist support—"another major achievement of the men and women who you say are accomplishing very little in Iraq." Third, Giuliani said, fighting Al Qaeda In Iraq and al Qaeda remnants in Afghanistan so far has prevented Islamic terrorists from again striking America.

Giuliani's response helps explain his appeal—and hints at liabilities. Hizzoner took much of last week off, resting in preparation for the grueling campaign season that begins after Labor Day. But the former mayor and his top campaign staff enter the fall confident they will prevail in the race for the GOP nomination. Giuliani appears to have halted his slippage in national polls and reasserted his national lead at about 30 percent support. He expects to raise more money from contributors than any other Republican candidate during the third quarter, which ends on September 30.

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And his articulate, aggressive stance on terrorism, national security, and illegal immigration is bound to resonate with the majority of Republican primary voters who list those issues as their top concerns.

So Giuliani is the Republican frontrunner—but he's also a highly vulnerable frontrunner. Polls show only a plurality of Republican voters understands that Giuliani is pro-choice in a pro-life party. As that number rises, there's a chance his support will decline. Also, Giuliani's main rivals for the nomination, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney and former Tennessee senator Fred Thompson, have only just begun to attack the mayor on immigration (Romney) and gun control (Thompson). Even Arizona senator John McCain, whom the Giuliani campaign considers down but not out in the fight for 2008, got into the fray. In a letter to voters released last week, McCain wrote: "I believe it would be a grave mistake for our party to lose focus by nominating a candidate whose commitment to restoring the proper role of the courts can credibly be questioned." McCain didn't say who that candidate might be, but he wasn't talking about Kansas senator Sam Brownback.

Giuliani fought back on immigration, and the gun control issue does not seem to have gained traction, at least for now. But the attacks will continue. There are also the twin issues of Giuliani's family and spiritual life. The thrice-married mayor has said his private life is exactly that—private. He won't go into it in detail with reporters, or voters. In the past, he hasn't spent much time discussing the personal mistakes he has made. And he has no plans to do so in the future.

The more serious vulnerability comes from the primary calendar. Giuliani's focus is on winning at least one contest prior to Florida's primary on January 29. Right now the target is South Carolina, whose primary currently is scheduled for January 19. If Giuliani pulls off wins in South Carolina and Florida, he'll be in a good position to take February 5 states like New York, New Jersey, California, Illinois, and Delaware. And if that happens, he'll be in a commanding position to win Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and D.C., on February 12, and—well, by then, he'll have the nomination.

Here's the problem. As things stand, there will be two, perhaps three contests prior to South Carolina: Iowa, New Hampshire, and perhaps Michigan. At the moment Romney has double-digit leads in Iowa and New Hampshire, according to the average of polls available at *RealClearpPolitics*. And Michigan—where polling indicates the race is wide open—is the state where Romney grew up and his father was a popular governor. A Romney trifecta, or even wins in two out of the three states, would bring huge amounts of free publicity and would greatly complicate Giuliani's South Carolina strategy, to say the least.

There's also the Thompson factor. Republican voters may respond positively to Thompson's laid-back charm, which contrasts sharply with Giuliani's politics of confrontation. Just ask the antiwar voter in Merrimack. The Giuliani campaign, looking to win pluralities if not majorities, predicts Thompson's entry will lower the number of votes necessary to win in any given state, thus boosting the mayor's chances by dividing social conservatives among many candidates. Thompson won't gain much more traction nationally, the Giuliani campaign predicts, but could emerge as a regional candidate who wins several southern states. But this would hurt Giuliani the most, as the opera-loving Yankee-fan's support in the South—bizarre as it may seem to some New Yorkers—is real. If Iowa goes to Huckabee, New Hampshire and Michigan go to Romney, and South Carolina goes to Thompson, what then?

The scenarios pile up. But one thing seems clear. Rudy Giuliani probably has to pull out a win in one of the pre-South Carolina states if he is to have a good shot at the nomination. ♦

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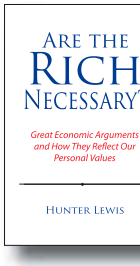

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The Long Hello

Finally, the Thompson campaign achieves liftoff.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

On March 11, Fred Thompson told Chris Wallace on *Fox News Sunday* that he was giving "serious consideration" to joining the race for president. Within a month he had made his decision: He would run.

Almost immediately, he was a first-tier candidate. News stories noted the intriguing new prospect, previously unenthusiastic Republican activists seemed invigorated, polling by news outlets and rival candidates showed Thompson as one of the top three Republicans. And he had not yet entered the contest. Times were good. So good, in fact, that Thompson joked about delaying any announcement indefinitely.

"I told somebody the other day: I can't afford to announce. I'm doing too well."

Now, after a series of well-publicized missteps and months of being subject to media scrutiny usually reserved for announced candidates, the opposite seems to be true: Thompson can't afford *not* to announce.

Although he had many friends and supporters encouraging him to join the race last spring, Thompson opted instead to form a "testing-the-waters" committee that enabled him to raise money and begin putting together a campaign operation. But Thompson's noncampaign has been marked by lackluster fundraising and personnel issues more characteristic of the final days of a losing campaign than the first days of a winning effort. Thompson hired veteran Washington hand Tom Collamore to serve as his campaign manager and fired him a short time later. The top communications staffer was brought on and dismissed in similar fashion, and another press officer left, too. An early effort to raise $5 million in June came up short, and in an interview last week with the *Politico*'s Jonathan Martin, Thompson acknowledged that the numbers from the summer would not impress. "I imagine we will fall off some in July and August and have a great September," he said.

Several Thompson supporters believe he made a mistake by waiting to join the race. They worry that his wink-and-a-nod candidacy has undermined his appeal.

There have been other difficulties. Thompson's team mishandled reports that he had lobbied for an abortion rights group in the early 1990s, strongly denying the story at first only to allow later that he didn't remember the details of those interactions. He told a tax reform group on videotape that he would "absolutely" sign legislation replacing the income tax with a consumption tax, but later said his answer was misunderstood.

Does any of this matter? Several Thompson supporters believe he made a mistake by waiting to join the race. They worry that his wink-and-a-nod candidacy has undermined his main strength: his ability to present himself as a plainspoken, no-nonsense conservative. What's more, they say, Thompson's refusal to actively campaign reinforces what rival campaigns have suggested is Thompson's chief weakness: laziness.

Others dismiss such second-guessing as the preoccupation of a chronically impatient pundit class. Thompson has always had a date in mind, they say, and he is unapologetic about his refusal to be pressured into the race. "The media are imposing models on the Thompson campaign that just don't fit," says one senior Thompson adviser. "It's still not yet a campaign. . . . Until you hit a date when the rubber hits the road, you can make mistakes. In these early days, Fred will tolerate mistakes made on his behalf and, in some cases, at his behest."

What's more, they say, it was not realistic for a candidate who was regularly polling second to jump in without a proper organization in place. "If you're Mike Huckabee, you can run with three people and a cell phone. Fred Thompson can't do that," says a second Thompson adviser.

Despite his difficulties, Thompson continues to place second in most national polls measuring support of Republican presidential candidates. "Giuliani's numbers haven't gone higher, McCain is down, and Romney's numbers are up where he's spending lots of money," says a third Thompson adviser.

"You've got to talk to people when they're listening," says Mary Matalin, an adviser to Thompson. "They're not listening in August."

Thompson hopes they'll be listening in September. On Wednesday, September 5, shortly after his Republican rivals debate in New Hampshire, he will appear on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno to announce that he will be launching his campaign the following day in a speech broadcast on his website, imwithfred.com. That evening, he will call in to supporters gathered at Thompson-for-president house parties across the country. Thompson will travel immediately to Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina—three critical early

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primary states. The second leg of the launch tour will include several stops in Florida, which Thompson strategists have long viewed as critical to their bid to win the Republican nomination. He will finish his initial campaign foray with a visit to his hometown of Lawrenceburg, Tenn., on Saturday, September 15.

His message is likely to be a blend of traditional conservative campaign rhetoric—on abortion, taxes, and immigration—and blunt talk about the big issues facing the country. Although Thompson will focus on three—the war on terror, entitlement reform, and tax cuts—campaign officials insist he will also spend a good deal of his time talking about issues that matter to social conservatives.

All of this means one thing: Thompson wants to position himself as the only viable conservative alternative to Rudy Giuliani. In conversations with several Thompson strategists over the past week, one phrase was repeated nearly a dozen times: consistent conservative. It is a not-so-subtle reminder, they say, that Giuliani is not a conservative and that, while Mitt Romney may sound like a conservative now, he has not been consistent.

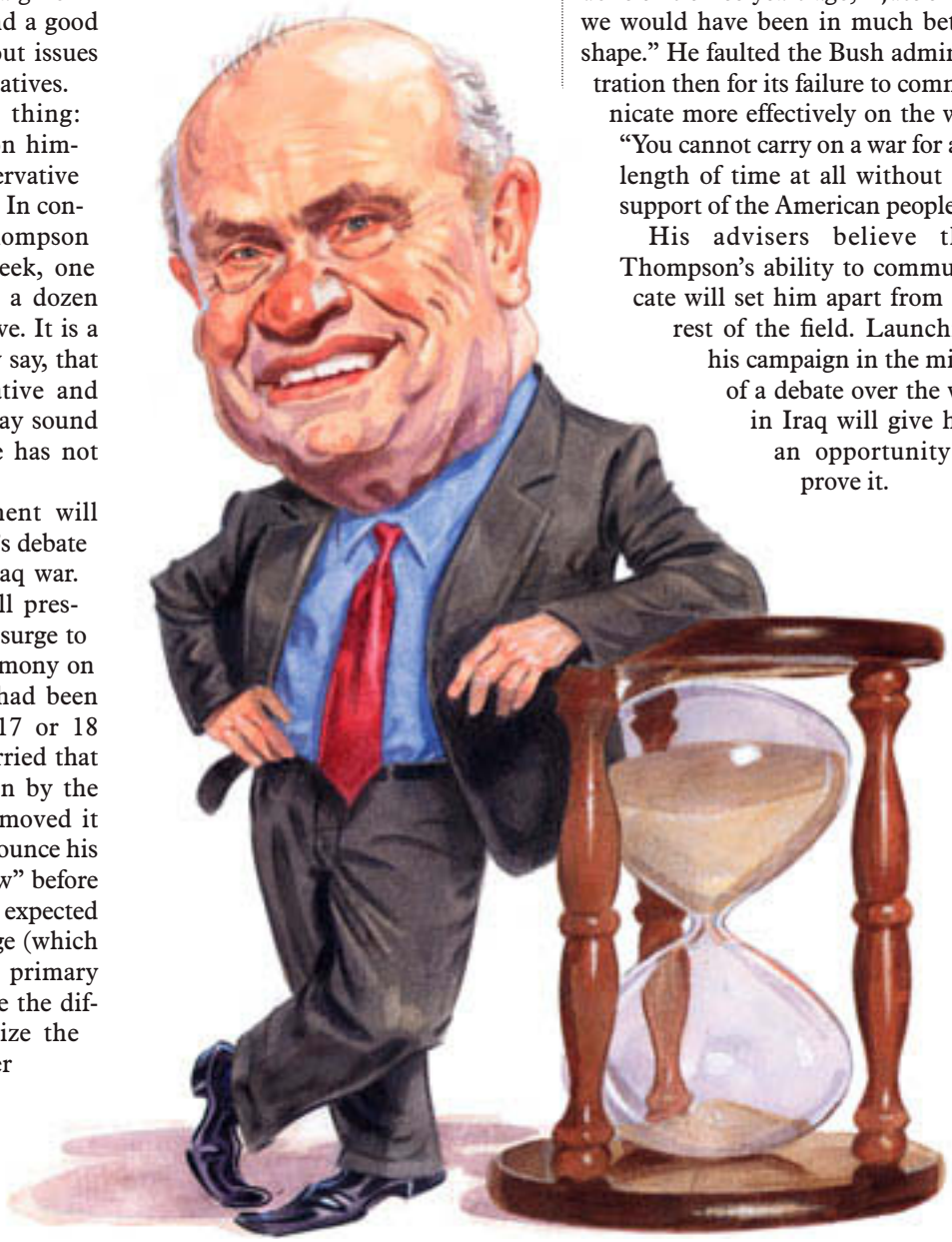
Thompson's announcement will come on the eve of Congress's debate over the direction of the Iraq war. General David Petraeus will present a progress report on the surge to Congress, starting with testimony on September 10. Thompson had been thinking of a September 17 or 18 launch, but his advisers worried that his thunder would be stolen by the debate about Iraq, so they moved it up. Now Thompson can announce his candidacy in a "news window" before that debate intensifies. He is expected to voice support for the surge (which plays well with Republican primary voters) but also acknowledge the difficulties in Iraq and criticize the White House. Indeed, other than McCain, who was calling for more troops before the war and has urged a larger U.S. military presence ever since, Thompson is perhaps the strongest proponent of the surge among Republican presidential hopefuls.

On January 11, the day after President Bush announced his plans for the surge, Thompson praised the new strategy in a commentary for ABC Radio. "I was struck by a couple of things [Bush] said that indicated not just a change in tactics but a whole new attitude with regard to what's necessary," Thompson said then. "He's taking the gloves off." Thompson, a strong supporter of the war who voted to authorize it in October 2002, ended his commentary with a soft but direct critique: "I'll bet that a lot of folks who support the president on this are asking themselves, 'What if we'd taken care of business this way two years ago?'"

When I interviewed him last spring, I asked Thompson if he was among that group ("Yep"), whether the surge is the last hope for a victory ("In Iraq? Probably"), and what specifically had led him to offer that criticism of the White House.

Thompson worried that the White House had waited too long to correct its mistakes on Iraq. "If we had done this three years ago, I just think we would have been in much better shape." He faulted the Bush administration then for its failure to communicate more effectively on the war. "You cannot carry on a war for any length of time at all without the support of the American people."

His advisers believe that Thompson's ability to communicate will set him apart from the rest of the field. Launching his campaign in the midst of a debate over the war in Iraq will give him an opportunity to prove it. ♦



Darren Gygi

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Gone-zales for Good

The attorney general takes his leave.

BY TOD LINDBERG

The sequence of events leading to the resignation of Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, per media reports, goes like this: White House chief of staff Joshua Bolten sends out a directive to senior Bush officials telling them that if they are not planning to stay until the end of the administration, January 2009, then they need to depart by September of this year. Gonzales, under siege from Democrats in Congress over his handling of the firing of U.S. attorneys and his role in wiretapping and other national security hot-button issues, decides he can't promise to go the distance and announces he is leaving. His friend and patron the president seizes the occasion to denounce the AG's critics, railing against "months of unfair treatment" of Gonzales, his "good name . . . dragged through the mud for political reasons."

Now, you would certainly be accurate in calling this a departure under fire. The adjective "embattled" has been inseparably attached to the compound noun "attorney general" at least since Democrats took control of Congress in January. But was the external pressure all that led Gonzales to quit? Or was there an internal political calculation to the departure?

There was always a political case for Gonzales staying, and it was well understood in the Bush White House: If Gonzales doesn't leave, you don't have to worry about the confirmation of a successor. If he does and you do, then you are subject to a process of political arm-twisting by Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Patrick Leahy and a supporting cast including the wily Chuck Schumer. Any nominee for attorney general would be in for a brutal grilling, accompanied by demands for right conduct in office, as Democrats define it. What price confirmation?

Perhaps the appointment of a special prosecutor to look into the firings of the U.S. attorneys? In Watergate times, Elliot Richardson had to pledge as much in order to be confirmed as Richard Nixon's attorney general—more, he had to come up in advance with a name acceptable to Democrats on the Judiciary Committee (Archibald Cox). The political damage done to the Bush administration by the appointment of a special counsel to look into the leak of Valerie Plame's covert status at the CIA was bad enough. The notion of setting loose a special prosecutor on the Justice Department and the political section of the White House in the waning months of a weakened presidency ought to have given, and by all accounts did give, officials a bad case of prospective heartburn.

So there was a certain raw logic to keeping Gonzales in place, even though most Republicans besides the president himself were singularly unimpressed with Gonzales's performance under oath on Capitol Hill on the U.S. attorney firings, and not a few were genuinely appalled by testimony in May this year about his attempt as White House counsel in 2004 to muscle Attorney General John Ashcroft in Ashcroft's intensive-care hospital room to reauthorize the White House's terror surveillance program. The political calculation dovetailed with Bush's loyalty to his old friend to reinforce the case for standing by Gonzales.

Has anything changed? Well, in fact, yes, though likely not Bush's personal loyalty. First, the administration is a little stronger politically than it was in the first months of the year. The Watergate scenario for capitulation to the demands of the Judiciary Committee Democrats requires a political collapse more drastic than what this administration has suffered.

Second, whatever commentators now say, the departure of Gonzales was not inevitable. The widespread awareness in Washington of the political stakes in the event of his departure mitigated against the expectation he would leave. Senate Democrats thus didn't expend much effort laying the ground for a broader post-Gonzales independent counsel investigation. The overall thrust of the Democrats' attack remained on Gonzales himself, which they may come to regret.

In late July, four Democratic senators including Schumer wrote Solicitor General Paul Clement (because Gonzales and his deputy are recused on this matter) requesting the appointment of "an independent special counsel to determine whether Attorney General Gonzales may have misled Congress or perjured himself in testimony before Congress." Though Leahy prudently did not sign that letter, he has been busy. On August 16, he wrote Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine asking him to "investigate and evaluate potential misleading, evasive, or dishonest testimony" by Gonzales. Only this week, days after the announcement of Gonzales's resignation, Fine provided Leahy with his answer: The office of the inspector general "has ongoing investigations that relate to most of the subjects addressed by the Attorney General's testimony that you identified."

The political implications of the Fine letter are large. Clement would have no reason to grant Schumer et al. their wish for a special counsel as things stand. But a negative report from Fine would open an entirely new chapter. If the IG report finds

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indications of wrongdoing and the acting attorney general has ducked the issue, the political pressure to let a special counsel sort it out becomes immense. So it is that as a result of Democrats zeroing in on the person of the attorney general, Alberto Gonzales has gone from a position as bulwark against the appointment of a special counsel under the pressure of confirming a successor, to a position in which he poses the greatest risk of such an appointment as a consequence of the political pressure from an internal Justice Department investigation.

So Gonzales's departure may be timely after all. As to what comes next, indications are the White House understands that there has to be a litmus test for the nominee to succeed Gonzales: namely, no commitments in the confirmation process to appoint a special counsel (or to overturn the position the administration has taken on executive privilege to shield White House officials from scrutiny under oath in congressional hearings). Someone coming in fresh with this attitude is fairly well-positioned to maintain that he or she has no conflict and is perfectly capable of supervising any ongoing investigation into the former attorney general's conduct.

Bush needs someone more determined to defend this line than to be confirmed for the job. Then it becomes a question of whether Judiciary Committee Democrats really have the nerve to turn down a qualified nominee or whether they will worry about overplaying their hand. If they had spent more time making a general case about the inability of the Justice Department to investigate itself satisfactorily rather than focusing on Gonzales, they might be better positioned. To press for an independent counsel now might look merely opportunistic.

If Judiciary Committee Democrats do press the matter to the point of rejecting a qualified nominee, Bush can resort to a recess appointment. That gets him out of Dodge in January '09. It won't be pretty, but the last couple years of a two-term presidency generally aren't. ♦

The Lopsided Netroots

Why there's no conservative Kos.

BY DEAN BARNETT

In early August, the collection of liberal blogs that refers to itself as "the Netroots" held its annual convention. The convention's name, "YearlyKos," invokes the allure of the liberal blogosphere's most powerful entity, the *Daily Kos*. All the major Democratic presidential candidates participated fully in the festivities in order to honor the Netroots. So too did all of the minor candidates with the exception of Joe Biden, who was on a book tour. By all accounts, Biden's absence didn't cast much of a pall on the gathering.

Dean Barnett blogs at HughHewitt.com.

A few days earlier, the Netroots' longtime organizational *bête noire*, the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, held its annual convention, titled "The National Conversation." A mere 350 people participated in the DLC's conversation, roughly one-fifth the attendance at YearlyKos. For their part, the Democratic presidential candidates apparently weren't feeling particularly gabby. None of them made an appearance at the DLC's annual schmooze-fest. The organization that once fueled Bill Clinton's presidential aspirations now can't even win the attention of Mike Gravel.

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Some people on the right fear that the left has developed an insurmountable advantage in harnessing the power of the Internet. While the *Daily Kos*, YearlyKos, and other bastions of online liberalism have clearly become power players, conservatives have no comparable entities. The right-wing blogosphere doesn't hold conventions, doesn't win the attention of candidates, and more important, doesn't move voters the way the progressive blogosphere does. The progressive blogosphere is a hotbed of activism; the most prominent outposts of the right-wing blogosphere stick to punditry.

But is this in fact a problem for the Republican party and conservatism generally? In order to answer that, you have to look at what the Netroots are, and what they aren't. Markos Moulitsas and Jerome Armstrong penned the seminal introduction to the Netroots' core philosophy in their book *Crashing the Gate: Netroots, Grassroots, and the Rise of People-Powered Politics*. The most noteworthy thing about Moulitsas and Armstrong's political philosophy as outlined in *Crashing the Gate* is that they don't have one. Seriously. A key part of their long-term plan is to open progressive counterparts to conservative think tanks like the Hoover Institution and the Heritage Foundation so Netroots denizens of the future will know what to believe.

Just because they lack a grand (or even not-so-grand) political philosophy doesn't mean Moulitsas and Armstrong lack a *tactical* philosophy. They want to win. In the past, Moulitsas has insisted that he practices the politics of "winnerism." This claim looks a lot less risible after the 2006 midterm elections than it did before.

Contrary to popular belief, the Netroots aren't particularly liberal. Opposition to the Iraq war aside, they're nonideological. They will happily support centrists like Virginia's Jim Webb or Montana's Jon Tester so long as those centrists are "proud" Democrats. One of the things that most animates the Netroots is the belief that the kind of politics practiced by centrist organizations like the DLC is best described as "loserism."

If you're getting the sense that the main difference between groups like the DLC and the Netroots is one of style, you're warming to the scent. The Netroots are passionate and in your face. They may not know what they like, but they know what they don't like. Their turn-offs include Republicans, conservatives, and George W. Bush. Their turn-ons are politicians and pundits who don't shy away from exposing and excoriating these turn-offs.

The Netroots never would have become what they are today if it weren't for the DLC. The Netroots collectively believed that organizations like the DLC sabotaged liberal electoral prospects. Therefore, the Netroots long ago set out to supplant the DLC. Based on the relative success of their nearly simultaneous conventions, Markos Moulitsas can now give a speech on a virtual aircraft carrier under a banner reading "Mission Accomplished" if he's so inclined. This part of his and the Netroots' war is won.

If you're getting the sense that the main difference between groups like the DLC and the Netroots is one of style, you're warming to the scent. The Netroots are passionate and in your face.

So what of the conservative blogosphere? Some online righties are trying to rechristen the conservative blogosphere "the RightRoots," but a name change won't alter the conservative blogosphere's basic composition or aims. Scott Johnson is one-third of the trio of wizened lawyers that runs the *Power Line* blog, one of the conservative blogosphere's most popular and respected sites. When I asked him why conservative blogs don't do the same thing as the Netroots, Johnson responded, "None of us purports to lead a movement, and we're working for a living."

Johnson, as usual, is 100 percent correct. Most prominent conservative bloggers are middle-aged. None has shown any interest in developing a political movement. There are younger conservative bloggers who share Moulitsas's ambition, but none of them has amassed a fraction of his audience.

Glenn Reynolds of *Instapundit*, the most widely read center-right blogger, amplifies Johnson's point. "Different needs produce different approaches," he says. "People on the right think their political machine works, but that the media is out to get them. Hence rightish blogging is more about punditry and reporting, and they've succeeded—note the paucity of lefty bloggers embedding in Iraq, while the number on the right is extensive enough that I can no longer name them all. People on the left, on the other hand, know the media is basically on their side, but feel that their political machine stinks, so they've focused on building a new one. And they've succeeded, too."

Let's conclude with a further note of consolation for conservatives, who might be panicked over their missile gap in the virtual arms race: Markos Moulitsas has frequently said his biggest asset isn't the size of his audience or the amount of money he can raise, but rather the soapbox that his prominence has granted him and likeminded lefty bloggers. Conservative bloggers have the same kind of soapbox available to them, but use it differently. Nevertheless, when the Republican party power-structure tag-teamed with Ted Kennedy to shove an atrocious immigration bill down Congress's throat, the "RightRoots" as personified by the conservative blogosphere and talk radio played a major role in killing it.

In other words, if the Republican party's "political machine" continues to misfire, the conservative blogosphere will be well positioned to help insist on a tune-up. ♦

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Our Posthuman Future . . .

on the small screen.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

Are you happy "merely" being human? Or do you wish your life could somehow be made into something . . . more? If you discovered a risky drug that would grant you a superhuman power—such as the capacity to heal the sick, kill enemies, or become invisible—would you take the shot? And if you developed a supernatural ability, would you begin to think of yourself as a superior being, with the right, perhaps even the duty, to rule? These are among the thought-provoking questions asked weekly in *The 4400*, a television sci-fi series now in its fourth season on the *USA Network*.

The 4400 began as a run-of-the-mill diversion about how the world reacts to 4,400 people, abducted by aliens, who return (apparently) from the future, each possessing a unique ability. Unexpectedly, at the end of last season, the show took a sharp turn for the better through a clever plot device: Jordan Collier, the villain (or hero), learns how to distill a substance called Promicin from the blood of the 4,400. Collier and fellow "revolutionaries" decide to change the world by distributing the stuff to anyone willing to risk a 50 percent chance of death to experience transcendence in a syringe. The program has ever since been exploring some of the most important cultural cross-currents of our time.

Take, for example, the malaise many apparently feel because they live ordinary lives. *The 4400* writers understand this, and thus many of the characters risk taking Promicin rather than live one more day of quiet desperation. Better yet, the characters' lives are transformed without their having to work for it. For example, one Promicin-taker goes from pathetic loser to well-paid and respected FBI interrogator after Promicin gives her the ability to force people to tell the truth.

In real life many people do yearn for extraordinariness to be handed to them on a silver platter. We see this propensity throughout the culture; from the explosive growth of cosmetic surgery, to the increased use of steroids, to the desperate craving to touch the lives and thus share in the glamour of celebrities, to the popularity of reality television programs that offer average people the chance to become stars just by playing themselves. *The 4400* producers understand well the seductive nature of their premise: They even have a spot on the program's website dedicated to a "fan of the week" who gains the honor by explaining which super-ability he or she would want, and for what purpose.

Our indulgence in expedient living is presented most vividly through the story lines of the show's protagonists, members of a government law enforcement agency called the National Threat Assessment Command (NTAC). NTAC is assigned to keep the 4,400 from using their superhuman capabilities and, more urgently, to prevent the distribution of Promicin. Yet, in a pinch, NTAC officers reluctantly avail themselves of help from one or another of the 4,400, whether to solve a problem in their work or in their personal lives. In one recent episode, the NTAC bureau chief's father is dying. Disobeying her sworn duty, she arranges to have a 4,400 healer cure him. She hypocritically goes back to work chasing down Promicin users, with the full support of her understanding team.

It's hard to watch the show and not be reminded of the sad "transhumanists"—real life wannabe 4,400s—who are so frustrated by normalcy that they invest all their hopes and dreams in somehow managing to transcend human limitations through the miracles of modern technology. And so they spend their days sharing visions of uploaded minds dwelling immortally in computer software "platforms" while they earnestly wait for "the singularity," a pending technological tipping point of such seismic power that transhumanists believe it will lead—literally—to the creation of a posthuman race. (See my June 26, 2006, WEEKLY STANDARD article, "The Catman Cometh.")

The most recent episodes have dug deep into our collective id, exploring the apocalyptic dangers posed by zealous utopianism. After the Promicin-positive son of one of the lead NTAC agents (as in all good drama, the relationships between the characters get very complicated) discovers an obscure prophecy foretelling the coming of the 4,400 with Jordan Collier as a new messiah destined to bring God to planet Earth, the Promicin revolution morphs from a quasi-libertarian social movement into an increasingly violent religious jihad intent on creating an earthly paradise by force.

The 4400 has grown into a series that is larger than the sum of its parts. Like the best science fiction, it offers viewers interesting characters who confront deep political issues of power and its use in a futuristic soap opera that entertains as it cuts through the mire of McLuhan's vast wasteland. It might not be art, but it is surprisingly good television. ♦

Wesley J. Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, is an attorney at the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, and a special consultant to the Center for Bioethics and Culture.

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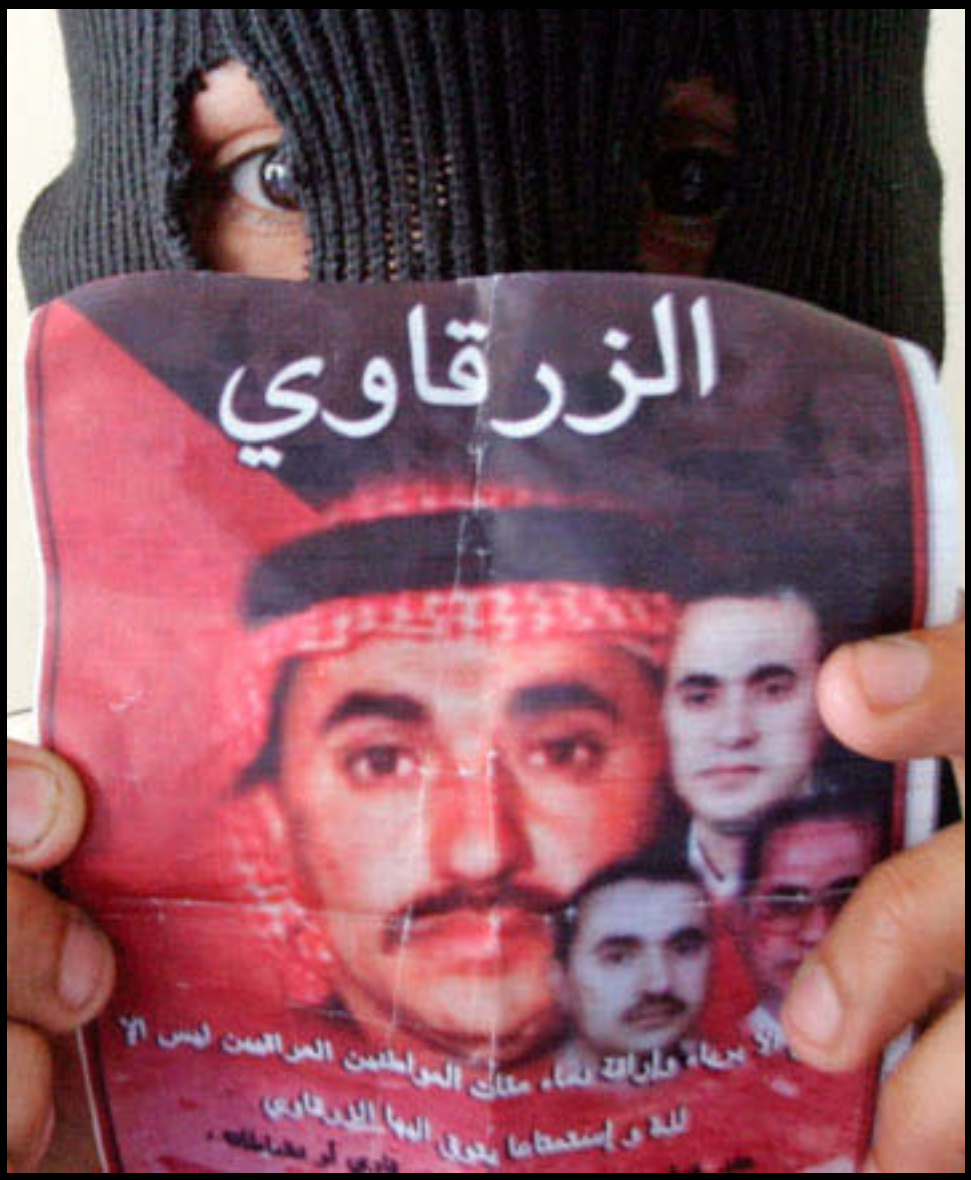

An insurgent holds up a leaflet advertising a reward for any information leading to the capture of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. U.S. aircraft dropped the leaflets on Falluja in July 2004. The leaflet reads in Arabic, "Al-Zarqawi . . . is only hurting your families, children, friends and innocent people by his terrorist acts. If you have any information about him or other terrorists then call the numbers below and you might get a reward." U.S. forces killed Zarqawi two years later.

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AL QAEDA IN IRAQ

How to understand it. How to defeat it.

By Frederick W. Kagan

Al Qaeda In Iraq is part of the global al Qaeda movement. AQI, as the U.S. military calls it, is around 90 percent Iraqi. Foreign fighters, however, predominate in the leadership and among the suicide bombers, of whom they comprise up to 90 percent, U.S. commanders say. The leader of AQI is Abu Ayyub al-Masri, an Egyptian. His predecessor, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, was a Jordanian.

Because the members of AQI are overwhelmingly Iraqis—often thugs and misfits recruited or dragooned into the organization (along with some clerics and more educated leaders)—it is argued that AQI is not really part of the global al Qaeda movement. Therefore, it is said, the war in Iraq is not part of the global war on terror: The "real" al Qaeda—Osama bin Laden's band, off in its safe havens in the Pakistani tribal areas of Waziristan and Baluchistan—is the group to fight. Furthermore, argue critics of this persuasion, we should be doing this fighting through precise, intelligence-driven airstrikes or Special Forces attacks on key leaders, not the deployment of large conventional forces, which only stirs resentment in Muslim countries and creates more terrorists.

Over the past four years, the war in Iraq has provided abundant evidence to dispute these assertions.

AL QAEDA WORLDWIDE

Al Qaeda is an organization pursuing an ideology. Both the organization and the ideology must be defeated. Just as, in the Cold War, the contest between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its captive nations was the real-world manifestation of an ideological struggle, so today, the global war on terror is a real-world contest between the United States and its allies and al Qaeda and its enablers. We can hope to defeat the ideology only by defeating its champion, al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda's ideology is the lineal descendant of a school of thought articulated most compellingly by the Egyptian revolutionary Sayyid Qutb in the 1950s and 1960s, with an admixture of Wahhabism, Deobandi thought, or simple, mainstream Sunni chauvinism, depending on where and by what group it is propounded.

Qutb blended a radical interpretation of Muslim theology with the Marxism-Leninism and anticolonial fervor of the Egypt of his day to produce an Islamic revolutionary movement. He argued that the secularism and licentious (by his extreme standards) behavior of most Muslims was destroying the true faith and returning the Islamic world to the state of *jahiliyyah*, or ignorance of the word of God, which prevailed before Muhammad. The growing secularism of Muslim states particularly bothered him. According to his interpretation, God alone has the power to make laws and to judge. When men make laws and judge each other according to secular criteria, they are usurping God's prerogatives. All who obey such leaders, according to Qutb, are treating their leaders as gods and therefore are guilty of the worst sin—polytheism. Thus they are—and this is the key point—*not true Muslims, but unbelievers*, regardless of whether they otherwise obey Muslim law and practice.

This is the defining characteristic of al Qaeda's ideology, which is properly called "takfirism" (even though al Qaeda fighters do not use the term). The word "*takfir*" designates the process of declaring a person to be an unbeliever because of the way he practices his faith. *Takfir* violates the religious understanding of most of the world's Muslims, for the Koran prescribes only five requirements for a Muslim (acknowledgment of the oneness of God, prayer, charitable giving, the fast, and the pilgrimage to Mecca) and specifies that anyone who observes them is a Muslim. The takfiris insist that anyone who obeys a

REUTERS / ALI JASIM

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The battle is by no means over. AQI has made clear its determination to reestablish itself in Anbar or to punish the Anbaris for their betrayal, and AQI cells are still trying to regenerate.

Al Qaeda In Iraq members execute 18 kidnapped members of the Iraqi interior ministry in a video clip posted on the Internet in March 2007.

AFP / GETTY IMAGES

human government is a polytheist and therefore violates the first premise of Islam, the *shahada* (the assertion that "There is no god but God"), even though Muslims have lived in states with temporal rulers for most of their history. The chief reason al Qaeda has limited support in the Muslim world is that the global Muslim community overwhelmingly rejects the premise that anyone obeying a temporal ruler is *ipso facto* an unbeliever.

Today's takfiris carry Qutb's basic principles further. Some pious Muslims believe that human governments should support or enforce *sharia* law. This is why Saudi Arabia has no law but *sharia*. But to Osama bin Laden and his senior lieutenant, Ayman al Zawahiri, it is not enough for a state to rule according to *sharia*. To be legitimate in the eyes of these revolutionaries, a state must also work actively to spread "righteous rule" across the earth. This demand means that only states aligned with the takfiris and supporting the spread of takfirism—such as the Taliban when it was in power—are legitimate, whereas states aligned with unbelievers, like Saudi Arabia, are illegitimate even if they strictly enforce *sharia* law. Some takfiris, particularly in Iraq as we shall see, argue in addition that all Shia are polytheists, and therefore apostates, because they "worship" Ali and Hussein and their successor imams. This distorted view of Shiism reflects the continual movement of takfiri thought toward extremes.

These distinctions are no mere theoretical niceties. The Koran and Muslim tradition forbid Muslims from killing one another except in narrowly specified circumstances. They also restrict the conditions under which Muslims can kill non-Muslims. Takfiris, however, claim that the groups and individuals they condemn are not really Muslims but unbelievers who endanger the true faith. They therefore claim to be exercising the right to defend the faith, granted by the Koran and Muslim tradition, when they endorse the killing of these false Muslims and the Westerners who either seduce them into apostasy or support them in it. This is the primary theological justification for al Qaeda's terrorism.

Takfirism is a radical reinterpretation of Islam that discards over a thousand years of Islamic scholarship and cautious tradition in favor of a literal reading of the Koran and Hadith that allows any layman—such as Osama bin Laden, who has no clerical standing—to usurp the role of Islam's scholars and issue fatwas and exercise other such clerical prerogatives. Interestingly, "takfirism" is what the Muslim enemies of this movement call it. Iraqis, for example, commonly refer to the members of AQI as "takfiris." This term has a strong negative connotation, implying as it does the right of a small group to determine who is a Muslim and

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to kill those who do not practice their religion in a particular manner. (Iraqis also sometimes call the terrorists "*khawaraj*," a reference to the Kharajites of early Muslim history that is extremely derogatory, implying as it does that al Qaeda members are schismatics, well outside of the mainstream of Islam.)

While takfirism is the primary theological justification for the actions of al Qaeda, it is not the only important component of the terrorists' ideology. Western concepts are deeply embedded in the movement as well, primarily Leninism. Qutb was familiar with the concept of the Bolshevik party as the "vanguard of the proletariat"—the small group that understood the interests of the proletariat better than the workers themselves, that would seize power in their name, then would help them to achieve their own "class consciousness" while creating a society that was just and suitable for them. Qutb thought of his ideology in the same terms: He explicitly referred to his movement as a vanguard that would seize power in the name of the true faith and then reeducate Muslims who had gone astray.

Bin Laden underscored this aspect of the ideology in naming his organization "al Qaeda," which means "the base." Qutb and bin Laden envisaged a small revolutionary movement that would seize power in a Muslim state and then gradually work to expand its control to the entire Muslim world, while reeducating lapsed Muslims under its power. Al Qaeda's frequent references to reestablishing the caliphate are tied to this concept. The goal is to recapture the purity of the "Rashidun," the period when Muhammad and his immediate successors ruled. This was the last time the Muslim world was united and governed, as bin Laden sees it, according to the true precepts of Islam.

Leninism (along with the practical challenges faced by revolutionaries in a hostile world) has informed the organizational structure as well as the thinking of al Qaeda. The group is cellular and highly decentralized, as the Bolsheviks were supposed to be. It focuses on seizing power in weakened states, as Communist movements did in Russia and China, and on weakening stronger states to make them more susceptible to attack, as the Communist movement did around the world after its triumph in the Soviet Union. Al Qaeda's center of gravity is its ideology, which means that individual cells can pursue the common aim with little or no relationship to the center. It is nevertheless a linked movement, with leaders directing the flow of some resources and ordering or forbidding particular operations around the world.

These, then, are the key characteristics of al Qaeda: It is based on the principle of takfirism. It sees itself as a Muslim revolutionary vanguard. It aims to take power in weak states and to weaken strong states. It is cellular and decentralized, but with a networked global leadership that influences its activities without necessarily controlling them. How does Al Qaeda In Iraq fit into this scheme?

AL QAEDA IN IRAQ

AQI is part of the global al Qaeda movement both ideologically and practically. Ideologically, it lies on the extreme end of the takfiri spectrum. It was initially called the "Movement of Monotheism (*tawhid*) and Jihad," referring to the takfiri principle that human government (and Shiism) are polytheist. From its inception, AQI has targeted mainly Iraqis; it has killed many times more Muslims than Americans. Its preferred weapon is the suicide car-bomb or truck-bomb aimed at places where large numbers of Iraqi civilians, especially Shia, congregate. When the movement began in 2003 it primarily targeted Shia. Zarqawi sought to provoke a Shia-Sunni civil war that he expected would mobilize the Sunni to full-scale jihad. He also delighted in killing Shia, whom he saw as intolerable "rejectionists," who had received the message of the Koran and rejected it. Even worse than ignorance of the word of God is deliberate apostasy. The duty to convert or kill apostates supersedes even the duty to wage war against the regular unbeliever—hence Zarqawi's insistence that the Shia were more dangerous than the "Zionists and Crusaders."

Bin Laden's associate Zawahiri remonstrated with Zarqawi on this point in a series of exchanges that became public. He argued that Zarqawi erred in attacking Shia, who should rather be exhorted and enticed to join the larger movement he hoped to create. Zawahiri's arguments were more tactical and strategic than ideological. He has no objection to killing unfaithful Muslims, but he has been eager to focus the movement on what he calls the "far enemy," America and the West.

Zarqawi too pursued attacks on Western targets, of course. He was implicated in the 2002 murder of USAID official Lawrence Foley in Jordan, and in the bombing of the United Nations office in Baghdad on August 19, 2003. But Zarqawi concentrated on attacking Iraqi Shia. A blast at the end of August 2003, for example, killed 85 Shia in Najaf, including Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim (older brother of Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council, the largest Shia party in the Council of Representatives), and a series of attacks on Shia mosques during the Ashura holiday in March 2004 killed over 180. He finally succeeded in provoking a significant Shia backlash with the destruction of the golden dome of the Shia al-Askariyah Mosque in Samarra in February 2006. Zarqawi was killed by coalition forces

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AQI is not simply a local franchise of the global al Qaeda concept. Its leaders participate in the development of the global ideology, as Zawahiri's exchanges with Zarqawi and al-Masri demonstrate.

An Al Qaeda In Iraq terrorist during clashes in Baquba in June 2004.

AFP PHOTO/ALI YUSSEF

shortly thereafter, but his successors continued to attack Iraqi Shia, even as they began to attack Iraqi Sunnis. In this regard, AQI has always been even more extreme in its takfirism than the global al Qaeda movement, which has equivocated about the legitimacy of attacks on fellow Muslims and the tactical desirability of exacerbating the Sunni-Shia split.

Like bin Laden's al Qaeda, AQI sees itself as a vanguard and defines its aim as reestablishing the caliphate. Furthermore, like takfirist groups around the world, it has attempted to put its ideology into practice wherever it has been able to establish control. AQI attacks judges in Iraq because they usurp God's power to judge. It establishes *sharia* courts to enforce its interpretation of Muslim law and custom. It even formally declared the establishment of the "Islamic State of Iraq," whose capital it variously located in the major cities of Ramadi and Baquba and the small village of Balad Ruz in Diyala, among other places. It designates "emirs" (commanders) to perform various functions and exercise control. It behaves in every respect as al Qaeda and the Taliban did in Afghanistan; indeed, it is almost indistinguishable from those groups in these critical practices—and in its intention to reach beyond Iraq at every opportunity. Thus, in addition to the Foley assassination in 2002, AQI conducted a complex attack on hotels in Amman in November 2005 that killed 60.

But AQI is not simply a local franchise of the global al Qaeda concept. Its leaders participate in the development of the global ideology, as Zawahiri's exchanges with Zarqawi and al-Masri demonstrate. It sends aid to the global movement and asks for and receives aid from it. In particular, it receives an estimated 40 to 80 foreign fighters each month, who are recruited by al Qaeda leaders throughout the Muslim world, helped in their training and travel by al Qaeda facilitators, and, once in Iraq, controlled by AQI. Finally, as previously noted, the non-Iraqis who are its principal leaders were part of the global al Qaeda movement before coming to Iraq. There should be no question in anyone's mind that Al Qaeda In Iraq is a vital and central part of al Qaeda, that it interacts with the global movement, shares its aims and practices, and will assist it as much as it can to achieve their common goals.

AQI'S MODUS OPERANDI

AQI uses two primary methods to establish itself in Sunni populations in Iraq. When it finds Sunnis who feel existentially threatened by Shia militias or military forces, or who seek military aid in pursuing an insurgent agenda, it offers help from its zealous and highly trained leaders and fighters. In communities not eager for such help, or that resist AQI's efforts to impose its religious code, AQI uses violence to terrorize Sunnis into participation. Wherever it goes, it seduces the disenchanted young with the promise of participation in a larger movement.

In 2003, the hostility within Iraq's Sunni Arab community to the prospect of a Shia-dominated government sparked an insurgency, of which AQI quickly took advantage. The fanaticism of AQI fighters (who often warn Westerners that they love death more than we love life) recommended itself to Sunni Arabs who faced the daunting task of defeating both American military forces and Iraq's Shia majority. The convergence of AQI and the Sunni insurgency in the ensuing years allowed the takfiris to establish solid bases in Anbar Province and then in Baghdad,

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Sunni areas to the north and south, Diyala, Salah-ad-Din, and Ninewa. AQI bases in Falluja, Tal Afar, and Baquba included media centers, torture houses, *sharia* courts, and all the other niceties of AQI occupation that would be familiar to students of the Taliban in Afghanistan and takfiri groups elsewhere. Local thugs flocked to the banner, and those who resisted were brutally tortured and murdered. Imams in local mosques—radicalized in the 1990s by Saddam Hussein's "return to the faith" initiative (to shore up his highly secular government by wrapping it in the aura of Islam)—preached takfirism and resistance to the Americans.

The presence of large numbers of Iraqis in the movement has contributed to confusion about the relationship between AQI and al Qaeda. Apart from the radicalized clerics and some leaders, most of the Iraqis in the organization are misfits and ne'er-do-wells, younger sons without sense or intelligence who fall under the spell of violent leaders. The recruitment process in many areas is like that of any street-gang, where the leaders combine exhortation and promises with exemplary violence against those who obstinately refuse to join. In this regard, AQI is subtly different from the al Qaeda movement that developed in Afghanistan. The takfiri elements of the mujahedeen who fought the Soviet invader in Afghanistan were highly diverse in origin. That war attracted anti-Soviet fighters from across the Muslim world. They did not fit easily into Afghanistan's xenophobic society, and so concentrated themselves in training camps removed from the population centers after the Soviet withdrawal and the rise of the Taliban. Americans saw these foreign fighters in their camps as the "real" al Qaeda, the one that attacked the United States in 2001.

But al Qaeda was only part of the story in Afghanistan. The Taliban forces that seized power in 1994 imposed a radical interpretation of Islam upon the population and attacked the symbols of other religions in a country that had traditionally tolerated different faiths and diverse practices. Like their AQI counterparts today, the Taliban tended to be ill-educated, violent, and radical. And they were just as necessary to sustaining al Qaeda in Afghanistan as the Iraqi foot soldiers of AQI have been to supporting that movement. Bin Laden provided essential support, both military and financial, to put the Taliban in power and keep it there. In return, the Taliban allowed him to operate with impunity and protected him from foreign intervention. The war began in 2001 when Taliban leader Mullah Omar refused to yield the al Qaeda members responsible for 9/11 even though the Taliban itself had not been involved in the attacks.

Afghanistan's extremist thugs and misfits, once in power, facilitated the foreign-led al Qaeda's training, planning, and preparation for attacks against Western targets around the world, including the attacks on two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998, the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in 2000, and 9/11. In return, al Qaeda's foreign fighters fiercely defended the Taliban regime when U.S. forces attacked in 2001, even forming up in conventional battle lines against America's Afghan allies supported by U.S. Special Forces and airpower. In Afghanistan the relationship between al Qaeda and the Taliban was symbiotic, mutually dependent, and mutually reinforcing. It included a shared world view and a willingness to fight common enemies. There was a close bond between indigenous Afghan extremists and the internationalist takfiris. Al Qaeda in Iraq benefits from just such a bond.

Yet there is a difference between the two movements in this regard: Whereas in Afghanistan al Qaeda remained separate from Afghan society for the most part, interacting with it primarily through the Taliban, AQI directly incorporates Iraqis. Indeed, the foreign origins of AQI's leaders are a handicap, of which their names are a constant reminder: Zarqawi's *nom de guerre* identified him immediately as a Jordanian, and the "al-Masri" in Abu Ayyub al-Masri means "the Egyptian." The takfiris clumsily addressed this problem by announcing their "Islamic State of Iraq," which they presented as an umbrella movement Iraqi in nature but which was in fact a thin disguise for AQI, and by inventing a fictitious leader with a hyper-Iraqi, hyper-Sunni name, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi.

As for its local recruits, they undergo extensive training that is designed to brainwash them and prepare them to support and engage in vicious violence. One of the reasons some Iraqi Sunnis have turned against AQI has been this practice of making their sons into monsters. Many Iraqis have come to feel about AQI the way the parents of young gang members tend to feel about gangs.

These AQI recruits often remain local. Young Anbaris do not on the whole venture out of Anbar to attack Americans or Shia beyond their province; AQI recruits in Arab Jabour or Salah-ad-Din tend to stay near their homes, even if temporarily driven off by U.S. operations. The leaders, however, travel a great deal—Zarqawi went from Jordan to Germany to Afghanistan to Iraq, and within Iraq from Falluja to Baquba and beyond, and his subordinates and successors have covered many miles at home and abroad. The presence of AQI cells in each area facilitates this movement, as well as the movement of foreign fighters into and through Iraq and the movement of weapons, supplies, and intelligence. AQI facilitators provide safe houses and means of communication. Some build car bombs that are passed from cell to cell until they are mated with the foreign fighters who will detonate them, perhaps far from where they were built. Even though most members of

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AQI remain near their homes, the sum of all of the cells, plus the foreign leadership and foreign fighters, is a movement that can plan and conduct attacks rapidly across the country and around the region, and that can regenerate destroyed cells within weeks. The leaders themselves are hooked into the global al Qaeda movement.

The integration of AQI into the population makes it harder to root out than al Qaeda was in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, American leaders could launch missile strikes against al Qaeda training bases (as President Clinton did, to little effect), and U.S. Special Forces could target those camps with or without indigenous help. Not so in Iraq.

Intermingled with the population, AQI maintains no large training areas and thus offers few targets suitable for missile strikes. American and Iraqi Special Forces have been effective at killing particular AQI leaders, but this has not destroyed the movement or even severely degraded its ability to conduct attacks across the country. New leaders spring up, and the facilitation networks continue their work.

When the Taliban fell in Afghanistan, al Qaeda lost its freedom of movement throughout the country. Most surviving al Qaeda fighters fled to Pakistan's largely ungoverned tribal areas, where they could count on enough local support to sustain themselves. Today there is little support for al Qaeda in Afghanistan, no large permanent al Qaeda training camp, and certainly no ability to conduct large-scale or countrywide operations against U.S. or Afghan forces.

The recent turn against Al Qaeda In Iraq by key Iraqis has produced less dramatic results because of the different means by which AQI maintains itself. Although much of AQI's support originally came from locals who sought its aid, by 2006 the takfiris had made themselves so unpopular that their continued presence relied on their continuous use of violence against their hosts. As Anbari tribal leaders began for various reasons to resist AQI's advances, AQI started attacking them and their families. Outside of Anbar Province, AQI regularly uses exemplary torture and murder to keep locals in line. The principles of takfirism justify this, as anyone who resists AQI's attempts to impose its vision of Islam becomes an enemy of Islam. AQI then has the right and obligation to kill such a person, since, in the takfiri view, execution is the proper punishment for apostasy. It is a little harder to see the pseudo-religious justification for torture, but AQI is not deterred by such fine points.

Like al Qaeda in Afghanistan, then, AQI initially relied on support from the population more or less freely offered. Unlike al Qaeda in Afghanistan—but like the Taliban—it also developed means of coercing support when this was no longer given freely. As a result, Iraq's Sunnis cannot simply decide to turn against al Qaeda on their own, for doing so condemns them to outrageous punishments. To defeat Al Qaeda In Iraq, therefore, it is not enough to attack takfiri ideology or persuade the Iraqi government to address the Sunnis' legitimate grievances. Those approaches must be combined with a concerted effort to protect Sunni populations from AQI's terrorism.

HOW TO DEFEAT AQI

One of the first questions Iraqis ask when American forces move into AQI strongholds to fight the takfiris is: Are you going to stay this time? In the past, coalition forces have cleared takfiri centers, often with local help, but have departed soon after, leaving the locals vulnerable to vicious AQI retaliation. This pattern created a legacy of distrust, and a concomitant hesitancy to commit to backing coalition forces.

This cycle was broken first in Anbar, for three reasons: The depth of AQI's control there led the group to commit some of its worst excesses in its attempt to hold on to power; the strength of the tribal structures in the province created the possibility of effective local resistance when the mood swung against the takfiris; and the sustained presence and determination of soldiers and Marines in the province gave the locals hope of assistance once they began to turn against the terrorists.

The movement against the takfiris began as AQI tried to solidify its position in Anbar by marrying some of its senior leaders to the daughters of Anbari tribal leaders, as al Qaeda has done in South Asia. When the sheikhs resisted, AQI began to attack them and their families, assassinating one prominent sheikh, then preventing his relatives from burying him within the 24 hours prescribed by Muslim law. In the tribal society of Anbar, this and related actions led to the rise of numerous blood-feuds between AQI and Anbari families. The viciousness of AQI's retaliation and the relative weakness of the Anbari tribes as a military or police force put the locals in a difficult position, from which they were rescued by the determined work of coalition and Iraqi security forces.

Throughout 2006, U.S. soldiers and Marines in Anbar refused to cede the province's capital and major population centers to the insurgents. Officers like Colonel Sean MacFarland worked to establish bases in Ramadi, protect key positions within the city, and generally contest AQI's control. At the same time, Marine commanders strove to reach out to Anbaris increasingly disenchanted with AQI. Commanders in the province now acknowledge that they probably missed several early overtures

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Deadly Threat of a Nuclear-Armed Iran

What can the world, what can the USA, what can Israel do about it?

Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has declared publicly – not once, but repeatedly – that Israel must be "wiped off the map." That effort, the destruction of Israel, seems to be the main goal of Iranian policy. When Iranian missiles are paraded through the streets of Tehran, the destination "to Jerusalem" is clearly stenciled on them.

What are the facts?

A death wish for Israel. Ahmadinejad and the ayatollah who is the "supreme leader" have publicly mused that one or two nuclear bombs would obliterate Israel, but that, though it would cause devastating damage and millions of casualties, Iran would survive Israel's retaliatory attack. Iran is a huge country, with about 60 million inhabitants, so they are probably correct. And who can doubt that those religious fanatics would not hesitate to allow the destruction of much of their country and to sacrifice a third or even one-half of their population in order to eliminate the hated Jewish state? When our country was entangled with the Soviet Union in the bitter 40-year long "cold war," with both sides having sufficient nuclear weapons to destroy the opponent's country and its people, things were kept in place by MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction. However "evil" the leaders of the Soviet Union (the "Evil Empire") may have been, there was one great consolation and assurance: They were not crazy. But the Iranians and other Muslims are crazies, as we understand the concept. Because they take instructions directly from Allah, who tells them to kill the Jews and other infidels, whatever the cost.

Israel has no problem with Iran. They share no borders and have no territorial dispute. In fact, they face common Arab enemies and should be natural allies, as they indeed were under the Shah. Iran's death wish for Israel is based entirely on religious fanaticism. In contrast even to the intractable North Koreans, the determination of the Iranians is immutable. It cannot be changed by persuasion, by diplomacy, by sanctions or by threats.

Once Iran is in possession of nuclear weapons, it will not only be a deadly danger to Israel, but to all of the Middle East and to virtually all of Europe. The flow of oil from the Middle East, the lifeblood of the industrialized world, would be totally under its control and so would be the economies of all nations of the world, very much including the United States.

What is to be done? In 1981, then prime minister of Israel Menachem Begin, being aware of Iraq's nuclear ambitions and looming realization of those ambitions, decided that its nuclear reactor at Osiraq had to be destroyed. The IAF (Israeli Air Force) accomplished that in a daring and unprecedented raid. Iraq's nuclear capability was eliminated in one stroke, never to rise up again. Israel had done the world an enormous service. Had it not been for Israel's decisive action, the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait and, without question, also of Saudi Arabia and its enormous oil fields, and, for that matter, of Iran, could not have been prevented. Saddam Hussein would have been the ruler of the world.

> "An attack on the Iranian nuclear installations would fall under the heading of "anticipatory self-defense," recognized and sanctioned by international law and by common sense."

The solution to the deadly threat that Iran poses to the world is obvious. Of course, diplomacy and persuasion, threats and promises, sticks and carrots – every possible means short of military action – should be used until it becomes clear even to the most obdurate that nothing can deviate Iran from its chosen path of becoming a nuclear power and to dominate the Middle East.

There is reason to believe that the people of Iran, especially the young people, oppose the oppressive and theocratic regime of their country and are hostile to the mullahs who control everything. But the government has the tools of power firmly in its hands. It controls the instruments of coercion – it can kill people and it controls the oil money. While it would be most desirable and in the interest of the world to be able to foment an overthrow of the Iranian regime, that is an unrealistic and unattainable prospect.

Regrettably, there is only one solution to the terrible dilemma confronting the world, the unacceptable danger of a nuclear-armed Iran. The terror, the destruction and the 60 million dead of World War II could have been prevented at several times during the Nazi regime. But the Allied powers, under the leadership of Britain's prime minister Neville Chamberlain, opted for appeasement and for "peace in our time." We cannot afford to make that same mistake again. The world must give Iran an ultimatum: Desist immediately from the development of nuclear weapons; if you do not, we shall destroy the facilities that produce them. There still is a window of opportunity to do that. That window may close very soon. But who would do the job? The United States would be the obvious choice. But if the United States were in accord, Israel could do it, just as it did the job in 1981 in destroying Iraq's nuclear potential once and for all.

An attack on the Iranian nuclear installations would fall under the heading of "anticipatory self-defense," recognized and sanctioned by international law and by common sense. Nobody really knows for sure how far Iran is from reaching its goal — six months. six years? The experts disagree. But if Iran is not stopped now, it may well be too late not very long from now.

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The notion that there is some "real" al Qaeda with which we should be more concerned than with AQI or any of the other takfiri franchises is demonstrably false.

Iraqi soldiers guard a suspect in Baquba during a raid on Al Qaeda In Iraq strongholds in August 2007.

STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

from tribal leaders, but they clearly grasped the more obvious signals the sheikhs sent in late 2006 and early 2007 indicating their interest in working together against the common foe.

The change in U.S. strategy announced in January 2007 and the surge of forces over the ensuing months did not create this shift in Anbar, but accelerated its development. The surge meant that American commanders did not have to shift forces out of Anbar to protect Baghdad, as had happened in previous operations. MacFarland's successor, Colonel John Charlton, was able to build on MacFarland's success when he took command in early 2007. He moved beyond the limited bases MacFarland's soldiers had established and began pushing his troops into key neighborhoods in Ramadi, establishing Joint Security Stations, and clearing the city. Marine forces in the province were augmented by two battalions in the spring and a battalion-sized Marine Expeditionary Unit in the summer. The latter has been attacking the last bastions of AQI in northeastern Anbar.

The increased U.S. presence and the more aggressive operations of American forces—working with Iraqi army units that, although heavily Shia, were able to function effectively with U.S. troops even in Sunni Anbar—allowed the tribal turn against AQI to pick up steam. By late spring 2007, all of the major Anbari tribes had sworn to oppose AQI and had begun sending their sons to volunteer for service in the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police. By summer, the coalition had established a new training base in Habbaniya to receive these recruits, and the Iraqi army units had begun balancing their sectarian mix by incorporating Anbari Sunnis into their formations. Thousands of Anbaris began patrolling the streets of their own cities and towns to protect against AQI, and coalition commanders were flooded with information about the presence and movements of takfiris. By the beginning of August, AQI had been driven out of all of Anbar's major population centers, and its attempts to regroup in the hinterland have been fitful and dangerous for the takfiris. The mosques in Anbar's major cities have stopped preaching anti-American and pro-takfiri sermons on the whole, switching either to neutral messages or to support for peace and even for the coalition.

The battle is by no means over. AQI has made clear its determination to reestablish itself in Anbar or to punish the Anbaris for their betrayal, and AQI cells in rural Anbar and surrounding provinces are still trying to regenerate. But the takfiri movement that once nearly controlled the province by blending in with its people has lost almost all popular support and has been driven to desperate measures to maintain a precarious foothold. The combination of local disenchantment with takfiri extremism, a remarkable lack of cultural sensitivity by the takfiris themselves, and

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effective counterinsurgency operations by coalition forces working to protect the population have turned the tide.

Anbar is a unique province in that its population is almost entirely Sunni Arab and its tribal structures remain strong despite years of Saddam's oppression. The "Anbar Awakening," as the Anbari turn against the takfiris is usually called, has spread to almost all of Iraq's Sunni areas, but in different forms reflecting their different circumstances. Sunni Arabs in Baghdad, Babil, Salah-ad-Din, and Diyala provinces have long suffered from AQI, but they also face a significant Shia Arab presence, including violent elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi, or Mahdi Army, the most extreme Shia militia. Diyala, Ninewa, and Kirkuk provinces also have ethnic fault lines where Arabs, Turkmen, and Kurds meet and occasionally fight. Tribal structures in these areas vary in strength, but are everywhere less cohesive than those of Anbar.

Extreme elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi, particularly the Iranian-controlled "secret cells," have been exerting pressure against Sunni populations in mixed provinces at least since early 2006. Some formerly Sunni cities like Mahmudiya have become Shia (and Jaysh al-Mahdi) strongholds. Mixed areas in Baghdad have tended to become more homogeneous. AQI has benefited from this struggle, which it helped to produce, posing as the defender of the Sunni against the Jaysh al-Mahdi even as it terrorizes Sunnis into supporting it. AQI's hold cannot be broken without addressing the pressure of Shia extremists on these Sunni communities, as well as defending the local population against AQI attacks.

This task is dauntingly complex, but not beyond the power of coalition forces to understand and execute. American and Iraqi troops throughout central Iraq have been working aggressively to destroy AQI strongholds like those in Arab Jabour, Baquba, Karma, and Tarmiya and in the Baghdad neighborhoods of Ameriyah, Ghazaliya, and Dora, and have largely driven the takfiris out of the major population centers and even parts of the hinterland. As U.S. forces have arrived in strength and promised to stay, thousands of Sunnis have volunteered to fight the terrorists and to protect their neighborhoods by joining the Iraqi army, police, or auxiliary "neighborhood watch" units set up by U.S. forces. In these areas, however, coalition forces have also had to work to protect the local Sunni from attacks by the secret cells of the Shia militia and by Shia militia members who have penetrated the Iraqi national and local police forces. The continued presence of American forces among the population is a key guarantor against attack by the Jaysh al-Mahdi as well as AQI reprisals. Indeed, the Sunni insist upon it as the condition for their participation in the struggle against the takfiris.

The description of the new U.S. strategy as "protecting the population" is shorthand for this complex, variable, and multifaceted approach to the problem of separating AQI from the population and supporting the rising indigenous movement against the takfiris. It has been extremely successful in a short period of time—Anbar in general and Ramadi in particular have gone within six months from being among the most dangerous areas in Iraq to among the safest. AQI strongholds like Arab Jabour and Baquba are now mostly free of large-scale terrorist infiltration, and their populations are working with the coalition to keep the takfiris out. The overall struggle to establish peace and stability in Iraq clearly goes beyond this fight against AQI, but from the standpoint of American interests in the global war on terror, it is vital to recognize our success against the takfiris and the reasons for it.

THE OUTLOOK

AQI—and therefore the larger al Qaeda movement—has suffered a stunning defeat in Iraq over the past six months. It has lost all of its urban strongholds and is engaged in a desperate attempt to reestablish a foothold even in the countryside. The movement is unlikely to accept this defeat tamely. Even now, AQI cells scattered throughout the country are working to reconstitute themselves and to continue mass-casualty attacks in the hope of restarting widespread sectarian conflict from which they hope to benefit. If the coalition abandoned its efforts to finish off these cells and to prevent them from rebuilding their networks, it is quite possible that they could terrify their victims into taking them back in some areas, although AQI is unlikely to be viewed sympathetically by most Iraqis for a long time to come.

If, on the other hand, coalition forces complete the work they have begun by finishing off the last pockets of takfiris and continuing to build local Iraqi security forces that can sustain the fight against the terrorists after American troops pull back, then success against the terrorists in Iraq is likely. That success will come at a price, of course. The takfiris have only the proverbial hammer in Iraq at this point, and they are now in the position of seeing every problem as the proverbial nail. Their hammer can be effective only if no one is around to protect the population: Their violence consistently drives Iraqi sentiment against them and their ideology. So the prospect of a thorough and decisive defeat of the terrorists in Iraq is real.

It is too soon to declare victory in this struggle, still less in the larger struggle to stabilize Iraq and win the global war on terror. AQI can again become a serious threat if America chooses to let it get up off the mat. Other significant takfiri threats remain outside Iraq, such

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as the al Qaeda cell that has been battling Lebanese military forces from the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and the aggressive al Qaeda group in the Islamic Maghreb that has proclaimed its intention of conquering all of North Africa and restoring Muslim rule to Spain. Each al Qaeda franchise is subtly different from the others, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to defeating them. But our experience in Iraq already offers lessons for the larger fight.

The notion that there is some "real" al Qaeda with which we should be more concerned than with AQI or any of the other takfiri franchises is demonstrably false. All of these cellular organizations are interlinked at the top, even as they depend on local facilitators and fighters in particular places. The Iraqi-ness of AQI does not make it any less a part of the global movement. On the contrary, if we do not defeat AQI, we can expect it to start performing the same international functions that al Qaeda and the Taliban did in Afghanistan: Locally active AQI cells will facilitate the training, planning, and preparation for attacks on Western and secular Muslim targets around the world. As has often been noted, the overwhelming majority of the September 11 attackers were Saudis, yet their attacks were made possible by facilitators who never left Afghanistan. AQI, if allowed to flourish, would be no different. It has posed less of a threat outside Iraq because of the intensity of the struggle within Iraq—just as the takfiris among the Afghan mujahedeen posed little threat outside that country as long as they had the Soviet army to fight. If the United States lets up on this determined enemy now and allows it to regain a position within Iraqi society, it is likely that AQI cells will soon be facilitating global attacks.

The idea that targeting these cells from the air or through special operations is an adequate substitute for assisting the local population to fight them is also mistaken. Coalition forces have relied on just this approach against al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan since 9/11, with questionable results. Granted, there have been few successful attacks against Western powers, none of them in the United States, for which this aggressive targeting is surely in part responsible. But recent intelligence estimates suggest a strengthening of the al Qaeda movement. In Iraq, years of targeting AQI leaders weakened the movement and led it to make a number of key mistakes, but did not stop mass-casualty attacks or stimulate effective popular resistance to the takfiris. It seems doubtful that Muslim communities—even those that reject the takfiri ideology—are capable of standing up to the terrorists on their own or with only the support of intelligence-driven raids against terrorist leaders and isolated cells.

Iraq has also disproved the shibboleth that the presence of American military forces in Muslim countries is inherently counterproductive in the fight against takfiris. Certainly the terrorists used our presence as a recruiting tool and benefited from the Sunni Arab nationalist insurgency against our forces. But there is no reason to think that Iraq would have remained free of takfiri fighters had the United States drawn down its forces (or should it draw them down now); it is even open to question whether a continued Baathist regime would have kept the takfiris out. The takfiris go where American forces are, to be sure, but they also go where we are not: Somalia, Lebanon, North Africa, Indonesia, and more. The introduction of Western forces does not inevitably spur takfiri sentiment. When used properly and in the right circumstances, Western military forces can play an essential role in combatting takfirism.

This is not to say that the United States should invade Waziristan and Baluchistan, or launch preemptive conventional assaults against (or in defense of) weak Muslim regimes around the world. Each response must be tailored to circumstance. But we must break free of a consensus about how to fight the terrorists that has been growing steadily since 9/11 which emphasizes "small footprints," working exclusively through local partners, and avoiding conventional operations to protect populations. In some cases, traditional counterinsurgency operations using conventional forces are the only way to defeat this 21st-century foe.

Muslims can dislike al Qaeda, reject takfirism, and desire peace, yet still be unable to defend themselves alone against the terrorists. In such cases, our assistance, suitably adapted to the realities on the ground, can enable Muslims who hate what the takfiris are doing to their religion and their people—the overwhelming majority of Muslims—to succeed. Helping them is the best way to rid the world of this scourge. ♦

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How Many Lawyers Does It Take to Sink the U.S. Navy?*

**Unfortunately, the Law of the Sea treaty is no laughing matter.*

CORBIS / "Old Ironsides" engages HMS *Guerriere*

By Jeremy Rabkin

In October 1962, President Kennedy ordered the U.S. Navy to prevent foreign ships from reaching Cuba unless they submitted to U.S. inspections on the high seas to verify that they were not transporting missiles or other offensive weapons to the island. Similar measures had been adopted in wartime blockades, but the Kennedy administration, not wanting to acknowledge a state of war with Cuba, termed this intervention a "quarantine."

It was a soothing term in the midst of a confrontation which threatened to trigger a catastrophic nuclear exchange. So the Kennedy administration did not let itself worry that its "quarantine" did not happen to correspond with any recognized practice in international law.

If a similar crisis should arise today, the Bush administration seems to think we could rely on an international tribunal to determine whether U.S. actions were or were not legally valid.

In 1975, when the Communist government of Cambodia seized the American ship *Mayaguez*, President Ford used airpower and a Marine landing to force the release of the ship. The United States acknowledged that the ship had been in Cambodian waters. Cambodia was not—in the midst of the murderous takeover by the Khmer Rouge—an obvious port of call. Rather than offer extended explanations or engage in extended negotiations, President Ford denounced the seizure of the ship as "piracy," authorizing U.S. retaliation with all necessary force.

If a similar crisis should arise today, the Bush administration seems to think we could rely on an international tribunal to rescue the American ship (after we'd offered full explanations on what it was doing in such a place).

In the 1980s, Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi claimed the Gulf of Sidra as Libyan territorial waters and demanded that foreign ships obtain Libyan permission before entering this broad bay on the Mediterranean coast. Since the mouth of the bay is 300 miles wide, it was not very plausible, under generally recognized principles of international law, to claim that all the enclosed waters were Libyan territorial seas. But Libya could have claimed authority to enforce conservation standards in an "exclusive economic zone" covering the whole Gulf of Sidra.

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Rather than argue the fine points at length, President Reagan sent a carrier task force into these waters in 1986 to prove that they were open to international navigation, without prior permission. The task force opened fire on Libyan patrol boats which tried to resist its intervention. Two of the Libyan boats were sunk, with the loss of all hands.

Today, the Bush administration seems to think we could avoid such unpleasantness by relegating all such disputes to the determination of an international tribunal.

Why does the Bush administration think these things? It might make sense if the administration thought international law had developed to the point where it could always be an adequate replacement for the use of force or even the threat to use force. But the Bush administration, now entering the seventh year of what it calls a "war on terror," thinks no such thing. It might make sense if you were, let's say, a typical member of the European Union, unable to deploy force on your own, least of all naval force at a distance—and unable to rely on the EU for protection, because the EU has no naval capacity (or other military capacity) of any kind. But the United States is far and away the world's leading sea power.

So it is very hard to understand why the Bush administration is now urging the Senate to ratify the 1982 Law of the Sea treaty. Sadly, among the biggest boosters of the treaty are officials of the Defense Department and even uniformed commanders of the Navy and the Coast Guard, who, coached by service lawyers, have decided to rely on unreliable legal safeguards.

There are, it is true, many useful things in the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (as it is officially titled). The basic bargain, embraced by U.S. negotiators in the 1970s, is sound: States were authorized to extend their territorial waters, where most national law still applies, for up to 12 miles from the coast, with an additional 12 miles available to support enforcement in the territorial waters. In addition, coastal states may claim regulatory authority over economic activities (fishing, seabed mining or drilling, etc.) for up to 200 miles from the coast. In return, coastal states would agree to assure rights of "innocent passage" through their waters for foreign ships, including, in most circumstances, foreign warships.

The Reagan administration endorsed the basic elements of this arrangement, claiming them as established customary law (since so many states did agree to these terms). In declining to sign or ratify the treaty, it focused on objections to the complex regulatory scheme established in the treaty for international control of seabed mining under the high seas (beyond the 200 miles claimed by coastal states as "exclusive economic zones"). In the 1990s, the Clinton administration negotiated an appendix to the treaty which greatly simplified the controls on international seabed mining, after which the Clinton administration—and major European partners—pronounced the treaty "fixed."

The fix for mining in international waters may or may not be adequate. No company with the resources to undertake a mining operation beneath the high seas has yet applied for U.N. certification to do so—more than a decade after the new regulatory scheme went into effect. But national security will not be greatly affected whether we can or can't finally engage in activities to recover mineral ore from beneath the high seas. Other aspects of the treaty pose much more direct threats to national security.

The most threatening may be the scheme in the treaty requiring all disputes about law on the seas to be settled by international arbitration. There is nothing wrong with submitting particular disputes to arbitration. The United States actually pioneered this practice in modern diplomacy, in a 1795 treaty with Britain negotiated by Chief Justice John Jay. Even U.S. boundary disputes with other countries were submitted to arbitration in the 19th century. But the United States has always resisted the idea that it could be forced into arbitration, especially where some outcomes were regarded, from the outset, as unacceptable.

Advocates of the treaty point to various reassuring features in this scheme. The treaty, for example, establishes a new international court to deal with sea-based disputes, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), based in Hamburg, Germany. What if that court, with 21 judges chosen by the member states (many of which we find unsavory), becomes as politicized as other U.N. organs have been? Not to worry, say treaty advocates: The rules allow states the option of settling disputes through ad hoc arbitration, with five arbitrators selected for the purpose by the individual states engaged in the particular dispute.

But it may not always be possible to agree with another state on which judges should be trusted. What annexes to the treaty establish is that, where states can't agree, each will pick an equal number of arbitrators and the tie-breaking additional arbitrators will be chosen for them (depending on the procedure they pick) either by a judge on ITLOS or by the secretary general of the U.N. So we are back to saying, if there's a dispute about what our Navy can rightfully do, we can trust the good judges of the Law of the Sea tribunal or the U.N. secretary general to ensure that the forum where our claims are resolved will take an open-minded view of our concerns. They will never be distracted by hostile intrigues, by jealousy of American power, by eagerness to build up international authority—who could suspect U.N. agents of such low motives?

But it won't come to this, anyway, say defenders of the treaty. The treaty expressly provides for states to claim

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exemptions from compulsory arbitration where "military activities" are involved. And the United States will certainly claim this exemption. But are we engaging in "military activities" when we deploy a naval "cordon" to enforce a peacetime "quarantine"? Are we engaging in "military activities" when, in peacetime, we send warships into waters where their right of passage is contested by the host state?

To answer such concerns, the Bush administration proposes that the Senate ratify the treaty with a statement of qualifications, including the "understanding" that the United States interprets this exemption to mean "military activities as defined by the United States." But the treaty expressly prohibits states from making "reservations" to its substantive provisions. For tribunal judges or international arbitrators to accept the American "understanding," they would have to accept the idea that any state can nullify its obligations under the treaty by characterizing all its contrary actions as "military activities" and therefore, if not permissible, at least immune to challenge from international authorities. How likely is it that the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea or its designees will take such a self-effacing or self-denying view of their own authority?

Advocates think it is worthwhile to hope for such results, because, they say, the treaty offers such important protections of naval transit rights. But the United States has, for over a quarter century, embraced the standards in the treaty as a guide to accepted international practice. By ratifying the treaty and committing ourselves to participate in dispute-settling mechanisms, we adopt not our own understandings but those which international authorities may choose to put on them. And it's not as if the standards set out in the treaty are so clear that they couldn't be twisted in dangerous ways by unsympathetic interpretations.

The guarantee of "innocent passage," for example, provides for exceptions. Among other things, coastal states may deny access to their territorial waters to foreign ships which engage in such "activities" as "collecting information to the prejudice of the defense or security of the coastal state" or, even more broadly, ships which engage in "any threat or use of force . . . in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations" (Art. 19, par. 2).

Recognizing that these provisions might be invoked against U.S. warships, the Bush administration proposes that the Senate's resolution of ratification stipulate this "understanding": Where a coastal state denies the right of "innocent passage" to a foreign ship (by denying that it is "innocent"), it must make such a determination solely "on the basis of acts [the foreign ship] commits while in the territorial sea [of the coastal state involved] and not on the basis of, for example, cargo, armament, means of propulsion, flag, origin, destination, or purpose." A ship is "innocent" if it behaves innocently—at that time. To nail this down, the administration also proposes a further "understanding": "The Convention does not authorize a coastal state to condition the exercise of . . . innocent passage . . . on the giving of prior notification to or the receipt of prior permission from the coastal state." Well and good, but many states have a contrary view.

If we commit to the treaty, we are leaving ultimate interpretations to be determined by international tribunals, which may not agree with our interpretations.

As a fall-back, the administration proposes yet another "understanding": At least in the 200 mile economic zone, when outside territorial waters, foreign ships would be entitled to exercise all the "freedoms of navigation" allowable on the high seas, including engaging in "military activities, such as . . . intelligence collection, surveillance and reconnaissance activities . . . and conducting military surveys." But many coastal states have a different view here, too.

So the treaty can be acceptable if interpreted as we want it to be interpreted. But if we commit to the treaty, we are, by its terms, leaving ultimate interpretations to be determined by international tribunals, which may not agree with our interpretations. The treaty stipulates that decisions of international arbitration must be treated as "final" and "binding."

Putting aside lawyerly questions about the meaning of "finality," if we ratify the treaty, we will, as a practical matter, find it very awkward (to say the least) to reject the interpretations that emerge from international arbitration of its disputed points. In 1985, the United States disputed the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice to hear Nicaragua's complaint against U.S. support for the "contra" insurgency there. When the ICJ rejected U.S. objections to its jurisdiction, the Reagan administration withdrew from the proceedings and insisted the United States would not be bound by the subsequent judgments against it (when, as expected, the Court did rule against the U.S. intervention).

But the Reagan administration had the courage to refuse consent to the Law of the Sea treaty. One reason defenders of the treaty say we must ratify it now is to reassure allies

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and skeptics in other countries regarding American commitments to international law. So, having bound ourselves in the most formal way to this treaty, are we really going to turn around and defy it—or interpretations of it offered up by its tribunal or by some other panel of international jurists—on the grounds that, in the end, we really mean to do whatever we please?

In all out war, we might disregard the Law of the Sea treaty—including its blanket admonition (which acknowledges no exceptions) that "the high seas are reserved for peaceful purposes." But if we've learned anything since 9/11, it's that the line between war and peace is not easy to draw in an era when threats of mass destruction can come from shadowy terror networks.

Take the question of suspects captured in Afghanistan—and the few captured elsewhere who have been brought to Guantánamo. Are they prisoners of war, covered by the 1949 Geneva Convention on this subject? The U.S. position is that such unlawful combatants—those who do not fall within the categories set out in the convention—are neither legitimate prisoners of war nor need they be treated as criminal suspects, who (according to international human rights conventions) must be either prosecuted or released.

The Bush administration has sought, in various ways, to mollify critics of its detention policy. Congress and the Supreme Court have insisted on certain legal safeguards and may ultimately demand more. But would we like the matter to be settled for us, all at once, by an international tribunal?

That is exactly what the Law of the Sea treaty would do: If we seize and detain a foreign ship and/or its crew, we must arrange some form of international arbitration within 10 days or the Law of the Sea tribunal will have jurisdiction to hear appeals for "prompt release." It has heard about one case a year in this category, since it got organized in the late 1990s and has never encountered a case in which it regarded further detention as justified. So, if we commit to this treaty, we will commit to having ITLOS review any seizures made at sea.

Far from treating such seizures as remote hypotheticals, the Bush administration has invested considerable effort in a "Proliferation Security Initiative" (PSI) under which the United States has signed agreements with states that provide flags for most of the world's commercial shipping. These agreements may strengthen U.S. claims to intercept suspicious ships on the high seas, when flying with markings from the most common flagging states (such as Belize, Panama, and Libya, which have all signed such agreements). But the PSI agreements do not make clear when or whether ships or crews may be subject to long-term detention, and all the agreements stipulate that they do not supersede accepted standards of international law.

If we ratify the Law of the Sea treaty, even a PSI agreement with the flag state won't necessarily keep a dispute about the seizure from winding up before the Law of the Sea tribunal in Hamburg. That tribunal has asserted its right to hear claims for "prompt release" when filed by owners or operators of a ship, even when the nominal flag state takes no role in the proceedings. In past cases, ITLOS has ruled that ships cannot be detained, even when claimants refuse to supply full information about how the ship was acquired and on whose behalf. So while we have jealously reserved the right to detain terror suspects captured on land, we will, if we ratify this treaty, give up our right to decide when we can hold terror suspects seized at sea.

The point isn't that we should try to shoot our way out of any future disputes about our rights on the seas. The United States has a great stake in upholding general rules of restraint on the high seas, both to protect our own ocean-borne commerce and to reassure others that we can use our power wisely. But in a crisis or a special case, where national security seems to require some exception to the general rule, do we want to leave ourselves dependent on permission from some international body?

In the past, writers on international law acknowledged that states could not be expected to submit the most sensitive political questions—those most vital to national security—to international arbitration. Most of the world seems to have abandoned this view, but most nations no longer make great efforts to provide for their own defense. So, even as the United States has substantially reduced the scale of its naval forces, since the peak years of the Reagan build-up we have acquired a larger and larger share of the world's naval capacity. Others have shrunk their forces further and faster.

In past centuries, rules about the conduct of ships at sea emerged from agreements among major naval powers, and there were always a number of naval powers engaged in challenging, enforcing, and accommodating agreed-upon standards. Now, when the United States (by some estimates) actually deploys a majority of the world's naval capacity, we are told that our security requires us to participate with 150 other states in electing international judges to determine, in the last analysis, what rules our Navy must accept.

To find this convincing, one must be awed by the moral authority of the U.N. majority. To think that way means that we seek consensus at almost any price. Why do we claim to be independent, why do we invest so many billions in defense capacities, if we are prepared to go along with an international consensus, articulated (and readjusted) by international jurists? The Senate should think long and hard before making the U.S. Navy answer to the U.N version of the Law of the Sea. ♦

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BETTMANN/CORBIS

Albert Shanker (center) and Bayard Rustin (right) during the Ocean Hill-Brownsville crisis, 1968

Mugged by Reality

Albert Shanker and the fall of American liberalism

BY FRED SIEGEL

The life of Al Shanker embodied the 1960s transformation of American liberalism from a creed with broad middle- and working-class support to a doctrine lodged primarily in the precincts of the poor and the professional upper middle classes.

In 1967 Shanker, the pioneer public sector unionist who built his New York City teachers into the largest local in the AFL-CIO, stood at the heart of the labor-liberal-civil rights coalition that was, at long last, bringing an end to racial segregation. Inspired by the civil disobedience of the Freedom Riders, Shanker served jail time for illegally taking his members out on strike. Shanker had marched with Martin Luther King in Birmingham and fought hard to integrate Gotham's increasingly African-American school system.

Tough Liberal
Albert Shanker and the Battles Over Schools, Unions, Race, and Democracy
by Richard Kahlenberg
Columbia, 552 pp., $29.95

A year later Shanker was, wrote Midge Decter, the recipient of "the worst press in living memory." Demonized as a "goon," "racist," and "Neanderthal," who was "but an accent away from George Wallace" by radicalized writers Murray Kempton and Jimmy Breslin, Shanker was reviled by many of his former allies as the incarnation of middle-class bigotry. It was a left-liberal *auto da fe* that reached its verbal climax in *Sleeper* when Woody Allen described Shanker as the man who had destroyed the world with an atomic bomb.

What intervened, explains Richard Kahlenberg in his judicious and engaging *Tough Liberal: Albert Shanker and the Battles over Schools, Unions, Race, and Democracy*, was the left-liberal swing from Shanker's integrationism toward Black Power symbolized by the bitter struggle, in Brooklyn's Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district, to give militant Afrocentrists "community control" over the local schools.

Shanker, a tall, nearsighted, and

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awkward Bronx Jewish boy born in 1928, had nearly been lynched by neighborhood nasties as a prank. Precociously intellectual, Shanker started reading *Partisan Review* at 15. He began to come into his own as a Boy Scout and member of his high school debate team. At the University of Illinois, just after World War II, he joined the Congress of Racial Equality and the Young People's Socialist league, and took part in sit-ins to protest segregation.

His interest in philosophy brought him to Columbia's graduate school to study at the home of his intellectual hero, John Dewey. But he lacked the *Sitzfleisch* to write a dissertation and so took a job as a teacher, where he discovered that, without a union, he and his fellow instructors were at the mercy of the principal's arbitrary authority. A skilled speaker and debater, Shanker, fired up by Sidney Hook's ideas about democracy, set out on a mission to bring workplace democracy to the New York City schools.

Shanker was drawn to the militantly antisegregationist and anti-Communist American Federation of Teachers, whose founding motto was "Education for Democracy." Shanker shared the action-oriented (and initially anti-authoritarian) impulses of the emerging New Left. In 1960, Kahlenberg explains, the older generation of teachers argued that the still-weak union had to grow before it could strike in violation of state law. Shanker, a veteran of the sit-ins, insisted, SDS-like, that "you have to act in order to grow."

When, in 1962, a victorious strike shifted the balance of power from principals to teachers, Shanker exulted—as would the McGovernites a decade later—in what he saw as a triumph over the corrupt old patronage system and the principals/political bosses who ran it. The pol-like principals had largely ignored the breakdown of order in what at times were "blackboard jungles." But Shanker, committed to the substance of education, insisted the teachers use their victory to take the lead in restraining unruly students so as to make it possible for others to learn.

Shanker was in tune with the new spirit of aggressive liberalism Mayor John Lindsay brought to City Hall. During the 1965 mayoral election, Shanker, his power greatly enhanced by the 1962 contract, was one of the few union leaders to support Lindsay. When Lindsay angered the city's outer-borough white ethnics, who felt under siege from rising crime rates, by proposing a Civilian Review Board to crack down on police brutality against minorities, Shanker was the only union leader who backed the mayor, despite the protests of many of his own members. Similarly, Shanker initially supported Lindsay's Ford Foundation-funded plans for "community control" of schools in black neighborhoods.

"As teachers," Shanker explained, "who have only recently struggled for a voice, we support others in this struggle. The right to democratic participation need not and should not be justified on grounds of educational efficiency. It has value in itself."

Shanker was about to be blindsided by the toxic mix of resentment, racial guilt, and revolutionary romanticism that engulfed both the streets and the chattering classes. In the wake of the 1967 riots across urban America, redemptive violence was touted by black militants and left-liberals as the balm for racial injustice. By the lights of the Black Power movement, integration into a desiccated white society had become the primary danger, so that street toughs—youngsters outside the norms of bourgeois life—had become the true revolutionaries, the hope of Black America.

The well-to-do Lindsay, uncomfortable with the concerns of the middle class, was drawn to this shift: Speaking of "young men . . . living their own special kind of street life," Lindsay said, "they are not. . . . to be feared. There is no warmer, sounder or firmer ally to have. . . . They are not a politically captive group. . . . The regular politicians . . . are just beginning to discover the power of this force."

Imagine, then, Shanker's shock when he discovered that community control meant that white Jewish teachers unacceptable to black-power street thugs such as Sonny Carson (later totemized in a Hollywood movie) could not only be dismissed from their jobs without cause, but also threatened and beaten with the acquiescence of John Lindsay.

Shanker's world, and that of much of the liberal Jewish middle- and lower-middle class, had been turned upside down. How could it be that, for Lindsay and his black-power allies, self-imposed segregation and unruly students could be the solution, not the problem? How, asked Shanker, could the union he had fought so hard to create, and its integrationism, have been so quickly redefined as "the real enemy"?

Shanker, notes Kahlenberg, fought back with precedent and logic. "There have been," said Shanker, "black schools throughout the country for more than a century," which is "precisely the opposite of the integration that people fought for in the South." Community control as it was being practiced was, he said, the "spiritual descendant of segregation" because it moved people in a "more provincial . . . more bigoted . . . more tribal" direction.

But this was all to little effect. Other battles in the civil war broke out at the City University of New York and at Columbia, in hospitals and in cooperative housing projects. In each case, the newly radicalized attacked liberally inclined institutions as "the real enemy."

Part of what made the Ocean Hill fight so extraordinarily charged was that, in most cities, similar conflicts were met largely by accelerated white flight. But in New York, Shanker, furious at what he saw as Lindsay's attempt to break the union, and dismayed by the liberal justifications for violence, stood firm. Thanks to Shanker's intellectual and political strength, Black Power and its radical chic groupies were met by a principled social democratic defense of 1950s liberalism.

After 40 years of liberal decline, it's difficult to imagine the centrality and intensity of the liberal-on-more-liberal clashes of a time when there seemed to be no political alternatives. The frac-

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ture over Vietnam, the rise of Third Worldism, and the New Left's anti-Israeli sentiment unleashed by the Six-Day war produced a witches' cauldron of hate and hostility.

Each of these conflicts bled into Ocean Hill Brownsville, so that the Afrocentric leaders of the community control movement were invested, by the left, with the antibourgeois moral authority of the Viet Cong. Jason Epstein, an editor at the *New York Review of Books*, captured some sense of the madness when he wrote that "the city is now faced with a classic revolutionary situation." So much seemed to be at stake that Epstein went on to argue that the "the alternatives left to the white majority" were "capitulation or genocide."

It turned out to be neither. The union emerged from the Ocean Hill conflict strengthened, but narrowed, in defense of its own interests. The New York schools, then the best big-city educational system in the nation, never recovered; nor did liberalism, as many embittered white ethnics became Reagan Democrats.

For his part Shanker, notes Kahlenberg, stuck to his beliefs. He worked with Ronald Reagan to bring down communism in Eastern Europe and Central America by helping to push the president into seeing the importance of trade unions for establishing free societies. But he remained a vigorous opponent of free-market economic and social policies.

Kahlenberg, himself a thoughtful social democrat, best known for arguing on behalf of income-based affirmative action, wants to revive the "tough liberalism" once represented by Shanker. But this is unlikely. Social democracy, with its admirable solidarity-based instincts, was a product of the relatively closed economies that defined advanced societies between the end of the first period of globalization and the onset of the second. But as power has shifted, to some degree, from national governments to world markets, social democracy has languished, even in its European homeland. It's doubtful that we will see Albert Shanker's like again. ♦

Thrilled to Death

Three new titles on the crime fiction list.

BY JON L. BREEN

"Thriller" is the label *du jour* for commercial crime fiction, favored over "mystery" or "novel of suspense." There is absolutely nothing new in the novels being advanced as thrillers, though some would have you believe otherwise.

Promotional copy for a Manhattan bookstore event during the Thriller-Fest convention in July included the following absurdity: "In the wake of the runaway success of such titles as *The Da Vinci Code*, a new genre of popular fiction was embraced by millions of Americans." In fact, Dan Brown's novel works best as an old-fashioned clued detective puzzle, albeit an unusually badly written one.

Red Cat
by Peter Spiegelman
Knopf, 304 pp., $22.95

The War Against Miss Winter
by Kathryn Miller Haines
Harper, 317 pp., $13.95

Chain of Evidence
by Garry Disher
Soho, 375 pp., $24

Far from being a new genre, thrillers can trace their lineage at least as far as 19th-century dime novels, which offered fast pace, physical action, danger, pursuit, and clear good guy/bad guy demarcations. In the 20th century, the term was used in Britain to denote the whole broad field of crime fiction; but more pointedly, it was usually applied to intrigue and espionage fiction and given added literary credibility by writers like Eric Ambler and John le Carré.

The rather vague definition of thriller today has been expanded to include serial-killer novels, some police procedural and private-eye sagas, romantic suspense, tales of medical menace and legal maneuvering, and supernatural horror.

The only 21st-century thriller elements that could be counted as remotely innovative are the least salutary ones: increasingly higher page counts, cruelly severe and repeated trauma and soap-opera travails visited on series characters, increasingly explicit violence, cinematically choreographed action scenes, and hyped-up suspense designed to artificially elevate reader anxiety. All the worthwhile elements contained in contemporary thrillers have been present in crime or espionage or detective fiction for a very long time with varying degrees of emphasis.

Many excellent writers produce books that are called thrillers by publishers or critics. But the celebration of the thriller—and its implicit denigration of the mystery, though essentially a matter of commercial labeling—should concern anyone who takes crime fiction seriously as a literary genre. Very few of the classics of the past emphasize the kind of "thrills" that seem to activate the present market. Their most important attributes always lay elsewhere: in the evocation of time and place, in the illumination of character and society, in the challenge of problem solving, in the sheer joy of language, in all the other literary values that characterize good fiction, whatever the genre.

To put it even more baldly, the whole idea of thriller centrality serves to trivialize crime fiction, whether hard, uncompromising, mean-streets *noir* or sophisticated intellectual puzzle.

In 2004, some thriller writers who

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felt their vital genre needed differentiating from the tired old mystery—including, of course, a new set of annual awards—formed the International Thriller Writers, Inc. Their ranks include many talented and distinguished writers, and the effort to advance the careers of their members is laudable. But the organization put its commitment to quality in doubt when, out of all the distinguished veteran writers to whom they could have given lifetime achievement awards, they chose two of the most literarily undistinguished denizens of the bestseller lists, writers who, for all their page-turning prowess, studious research, and other sterling qualities, turn out numbingly flavorless prose and dialogue: Clive Cussler and James Patterson.

Three recent books—a private eye novel, an amateur-detective historical, and a police procedural set in Australia—demonstrate the attributes of first-rate mystery fiction that are sometimes overlooked in today's rush for thrills.

Peter Spiegelman's *Red Cat* is the third novel about New York private detective John March. His brother and client, David, so abrasive and annoying that only ties of blood could explain March taking his case, is being stalked by a woman he knows only as Wren, a meant-to-be-casual sex partner he met online. March is an old-style private eye in a present-day setting. He uses the Internet as a prime investigative tool, and the plot concerns a sick variation on the video art that has so many contemporary galleries in its thrall.

Spiegelman demands to be read for the same qualities that marked his hardboiled predecessors. In questioning a witness, March paraphrases a line from Dashiell Hammett's *Maltese Falcon*: "I wasn't sure if it was my story he believed, or my fifty dollars." Like Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald, he excels at descriptions of people, weather, rooms, and atmosphere, including a strong evocation of Manhattan in a snowstorm.

Lines of metaphorical prose establish the scene and the character's frame of mind simultaneously: "An icy wind was blowing off the East River and it bullied me along in its rush to Jersey." "A jaundiced sunset was seeping through the clouds as I drove into Tarrytown, and it tinted the Hudson in the colors of a faded bruise."

March's interaction with lawyers and cops doing their jobs rings true. The unlikelihood and inadvisability of a PI treading on police turf to investigate murder is motivated reasonably. The characters come to life, and the mystery is genuinely puzzling and satisfactorily resolved. All that's missing are the fairly placed clues that Hammett or Macdonald would have provided to enable the canny reader to anticipate the surprise solution. Among the attributes that make Spiegelman worth recommending—style, characters, sense of time and place, specialized background, procedural details, mystery—thrills are well down the list.

Some crime novels show the reader how things work in a particular line of business or profession, how people live in another time or place. Serving both these informative functions is Kathryn Miller Haines's first novel, *The War Against Miss Winter*, which in current mystery parlance must be designated a cozy. After all, it has a cat for a character (albeit an unpleasant one) and is told by a wisecracking female narrator whose romantic conflicts and longings are important to the narrative.

In 1943 New York, unemployed actress Rosie Winter is working as a receptionist for a private eye. The discovery of her boss hanging in the office closet begins her involvement in a tantalizing mystery involving the rumored lost play of an admired experimental playwright. In order to stay a resident of a women's theatrical boarding house—recalling the setting of George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber's *Stage Door*—Rosie must get an acting job. She and her now-soldier boyfriend parted on bad terms, and various possible (if mostly unlikely) substitute romantic interests present themselves.

It may be that the most accurate period fiction takes place within the last half- to three-quarters of a century before it is written, a time within memory of living people (if not the author): close enough to understand the mores and attitudes, easier to get the language and cultural details right (though more likely to be called out if you get them wrong), a sense of the reality without rose-colored nostalgia or sentimentality, a better chance at capturing how people talked, thought, and lived with a few years of perspective.

Haines is nearly note-perfect most of the way in capturing the home-front mood and lifestyle, but trips up on pronouns that are politically correct by current standards but off-base historically. No proper writer in 1943 would have written "a participant places *their* ego" rather than "*his* ego," and I doubt a theatrical woman of the time would have said, "You don't drag an actor through hell without *her* ass getting singed" (all italics mine).

Still, the prose is lively, the characters well drawn, and despite the general unbelievability of the plot and its payoff, the novel should have no trouble drawing readers to its projected sequel. The brief segments trying to generate thriller-type suspense are disposably perfunctory.

Australian Garry Disher's *Chain of Evidence* begins with a situation more in the thriller line than either of the other two novels: A 10-year-old girl is abducted by the operator of a children's modeling agency scam. What one foresees—alternating chapters from the viewpoint of the villainous captor, the child in jeopardy, the worried parents, and the law—happily does not materialize. What we have instead is a Down Under equivalent of Ed McBain's 87th Precinct, with several cops, various in their personalities and relationships, working on numerous cases, some related but most not.

Male/female police teams are almost *de rigueur* in current procedural fiction, with real or potential sexual tension an optional add-on. Here the two leads are separated by circumstance but deal with the novel's two principal cases. In Waterloo on the Mornington Peninsula, Sergeant Ellen Destry is holding the fort for her boss, Inspector Hal Challis, who has traveled to his South Australia home to spend a month with

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his dying father. While Destry spearheads the investigation of the abduction, Challis unofficially looks into his brother-in-law's unsolved disappearance five years before.

Based on the back story, particularly regarding Challis's late wife, both are apparently among those series characters with excessively eventful and harrowing personal lives. Other cop activities touched on include a detective training course, the dubious police shooting of a career burglar, and the breaking-in of a new private forensics lab. Disher is clearly an expert at this sort of thing, and the distinctive setting is an added benefit.

These are three very good crime novels of three diverse types. Though they could have gone in the direction of elongated action scenes and overwrought anxiety generation, they are better books for choosing another direction. ♦

Modern Singlehood

The Me Decades are gone. What comes next?

BY ABIGAIL LAVIN

The self-help section of your local Barnes & Noble is essentially a catalogue of human egoism, folly, and desperation. Bestselling titles include 1937's *How To Win Friends and Influence People* (Tip #1: Don't let them see you reading this book), *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Amazing Sex* (stop procreating), *The 4-Hour Workweek* (yeah, right), and *Why Men Marry Bitches* (helping single women maintain holier-than-thou attitudes since 2006).

Now and Not Yet
Making Sense of Single Life in the Twenty-First Century
by Jennifer A. Marshall
Multnomah, 208 pp., $13.99

Thank God for Jennifer Marshall, who turns these misbegotten recipes for self-actualization on their heads. In her debut book, Marshall presents a self-help guide which tells us that helping ourselves is not the point—a daring proposition in our era of individualism. Instead of attempting to micromanage ourselves into an uncompromising vision of the good life, what if we stepped back and lived for the sake of something larger than personal fulfillment?

As Marshall puts it, "What makes us think we can demand concierge treatment from God, as though He needs to consult us about whether we'd prefer the direct or scenic route? God isn't running a tourist agency. . . . Life isn't about finding ourselves; it's about glorifying God."

Marshall, director of domestic policy studies at the Heritage Foundation, writes with thoughtfulness and an optimism that make this a rewarding read for people outside her target audience of "never-married Christian women in their midtwenties to midforties who are generally well-educated and living mostly in suburban or urban areas."

Because *Now and Not Yet* is not marketed as an overtly Christian book—there is no mention of God or religion on the front cover, and only a passing reference to faith on the back—an unwitting browser may be put off if she flips open to the chapter on "God's callings." But taken as a whole, chances are that a married agnostic man or a Jewish teenager could find nourishment in Marshall's writing, which is spiritual but not unctuous, sensible but not prosaic. She offers original advice on how best to enjoy the life we're living rather than the life we've patched together for ourselves from snippets of romantic movies.

But because this is largely a work of sociology, let's get back to Marshall's target audience and the question of marriage. In the early 1970s the average age for a first marriage was just under 21. Today it is over 25. Three out of 10 American women are unmarried at age 30. But Marshall posits that this is not due to a lessened desire for marriage among women—nine out of 10 high school girls still say that a good marriage is an important factor in their future plans—but mackled romantic rituals and women's lib, which left women with more choices but did not necessarily arm us with the ability to choose well.

Marshall harks back to her parents' generation, when "life wasn't about finding yourself; it was about knowing God." But instead of mourning bygone social norms, Marshall challenges readers to adapt to the particularities of modern life.

Her discussion of feminism as a movement begins with Title IX, the 1972 federal mandate of educational equality between the sexes. Gen X girls coming of age after the passage of Title IX saw unprecedented options in education, athletics, and the workplace. But with more options comes more ambiguity: Women are "allowed" to remain single, and many choose to do so. But the expectation of marriage is strong enough that, when we meet an unmarried fortysomething woman, part of us can't help but wonder what led her to her "lonely" situation.

Many educated, successful women deal with the *Sex and the City* paradox: Though tired of shibboleths from their mothers' generation, they still find themselves frantically searching for a mate. They have it all, but feel incomplete.

As background research, Marshall conducted interviews with 12 women in four cities and solicited extensive written feedback from three others. Thirty-one women participated in focus groups in Washington, New York, Chicago, and Long Beach, California. For a broader perspective, Marshall conducted an online survey of 650

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women and held focus groups of Christian men in their 20s and 30s.

Her research enables her to pepper her writing with colorful quotations and first-person experiences. The common thread across a wide variety of experience is the struggle to cope when reality does not match one's expectations of what age 25, 30, or 45 is supposed to look like. As the gap widens between college graduation and wedding bells, many women feel they are in uncharted territory. Marshall offers helpful meditations on living deliberately instead of simply killing time until life begins to resemble our fantasy version of the future.

Amid the romantic rat race, the cacophony of others' expectations, and the endless swirl of options, Marshall asks, what can help us maintain balance? How can we hope for marriage without fretting about it? Is marriage an end in itself, or is it part of a larger picture?

> Stranded between the autopilot of adolescence and the anchor of marriage, a girl can feel adrift in some twilight zone between legitimate episodes of her life. That's the risk of fixing our sights on Destination Marriage as the North Star. . . . By contrast, God's call helps us orient ourselves toward a fixed point of reference: Himself. Not ourselves, not men, and not marriage.

Male readers would benefit particularly from the section on modern romance, which dispels the myth that a woman's professional success and her desire for romance are mutually exclusive. In fact, no woman fits neatly into the archetype of Penelope or piranha: "Women who have had to be self-sufficient for years find themselves in a difficult position: they want emotional support, but it doesn't appear they need it," she writes. Marshall examines modern dating from multiple angles, drawing on Jane Austen, discussing the pros and cons of online and speed dating, and analyzing the pitfalls of the campus hook-up culture.

Marshall does advocate a certain type of individualism; that is, the tailor-made nature of an individual's relationship to God. Before God, Marshall points out, a woman is not accountable as a feminist or traditionalist but simply as herself. Here the advantages of faith-based self-help are manifest. If God has a plan for each of us, what's the point of keeping up with the Joneses? Comparing ourselves with others becomes apples and oranges: If we put our trust in "cosmic choreography," Marshall says, then each of us can "have the assurance that where you are is where you are supposed to be. You have not been demoted to consolation plan B if you are single, unemployed, or generally not where you thought you'd be at this point in life. Plan B does not exist."

This refreshing view is, at once, merciful and merciless. Life isn't what you thought it would be? Too bad. It's not all about you. ♦

Slav vs. Teuton

The existential horror of the Eastern Front.

BY BENJAMIN HERMAN

Earlier this year, the government of Estonia took a step that sparked outrage across Russia. The Russian parliament called for severing diplomatic ties with Estonia. Members of youth groups loyal to the Kremlin threw rocks at the Estonian embassy in Moscow and blockaded the entrance. The Russian foreign minister called Estonia's action "disgusting," "blasphemous," and vowed "to take serious measures" in response.

Ivan's War
Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945
by Catherine Merridale
Picador, 480 pp., $15

Days later, it became clear what those measures might be when Estonia, one of the most wired nations in the world, was hit with what may have been the first act of state-sponsored cyberwarfare in history. Whether the Russian hackers were acting at the behest of the government or not—experts now appear to doubt the Kremlin's direct involvement—it was clear that Estonia had touched a nerve running throughout the Russian body politic.

What mortal sin did Estonia commit against the Russian state to provoke such a tantrum? Sink a Russian ship? Spill toxic chemicals into Russian waters? No, what the Estonian government did was utterly innocuous: They moved a Soviet World War II memorial from the center of their capital city, Tallinn, to a military cemetery across town. To understand how an action as unassailably proper as the relocation by a sovereign state of a monument within its borders could cause so many reasonable grownups to throw such an unreasonable tantrum, one can learn a lot from *Ivan's War*, Catherine Merridale's superb account of the Soviet experience of the Second World War.

The Red Army was unprepared for the German invasion in every respect: Soldiers were rushed to the front with minimal training and with grossly inadequate supplies of, well, everything. Worse, they were fatally undermined by an offensive military strategy totally unsuited for the defensive posture in which the invaders had placed them. The result was a breathtaking number of casualties—over three million soldiers were killed, incapacitated, or captured in the first four months of the war—with little to show for the effort.

The threat of extinction has a way of making even the most rigid ideologue grow flexible, and with German troops

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nearing Moscow, Stalin finally allowed pragmatism to trump socialism. *Politruki*, the political officers placed in every unit to enforce Leninist orthodoxy, were cut out of the military decision-making process, and promotions were awarded based on merit rather than ideology. Commanders began to discourage the sort of suicidal heroics that had led so many troops to pointless death in the early months of the war. The law forbidding former kulaks (affluent peasants) from army service was repealed. And in 1943, thanks to crucial victories at Stalingrad and Kursk, the increasingly professional Red Army turned the tide and began its march all the way to Berlin.

German Volksturm *(Home Guard) taken prisoner in Pomerania, 1945*

Ivan's War is not, however, a wonky military chronicle—though it definitely could use more maps. Instead, Merridale conducts a survey that is anthropological in nature, examining all the elements of Red Army society: food, art, sex, religion, humor, clothing, and so on. She brings a novelist's skills to the task by stressing the *sensory* experience of the soldiers: the ubiquitous sight of piles of corpses; the deafening roar of explosions; the disgusting taste of the cabbage soup soldiers were fed; the smell of decaying flesh; the sensation of lice on one's scalp; the stifling heat generated by burning tanks. (Merridale explains why perishing in a tank is an extremely unpleasant way to die.)

She enriches her account of life on the eastern front with recurring detours into biography. Using letters, diaries, and 200 interviews she conducted with veterans, she puts a human face on the terror, rage, and loneliness soldiers felt. Her cast of characters—a cross-section of officers and grunts, loyal Communists and doubters, peasants and city-dwellers—guide us through the war with their contemporaneous observations. Merridale has a knack for enlivening the text with vivid quotations from witnesses to the carnage.

Here, for example, is an excerpt from a letter a Red Army officer wrote to his wife during the long, savage battle for Stalingrad:

> I never thought I'd be capable of the kind of ruthlessness that really borders on cruelty. I thought I was a good-hearted person, but it seems that a human being can hide within himself for a long time the qualities that surface only at a time like this.

Though *Ivan's War* proceeds in chronological order, its loose structure allows Merridale to explore dozens of fascinating topics: the high rates of desertion; Stalin's appalling treatment of the Tatar minority; the murder of hated officers by their own troops; the widespread graft among officers; the Kremlin's decision to ignore in its wartime propaganda Germany's treatment of the Jews. (Details of the Holocaust, Stalin feared, could undermine the Soviet Union's status as the war's number one victim.)

Foremost among these is the question of motivation: Why did so many fight so valiantly for an evil dictator and a system that oppressed them? The answer, in the main, is twofold: fear and revenge.

Red Army troops feared the German enemy, but they often lived in a more immediate fear of their own superiors. In July 1942, his army demoralized and exhausted, Stalin elevated terror to a supreme position in his war strategy by issuing Order No. 227. Henceforth, withdrawal from a firing position was punishable by death. Entire units were assigned to stand behind the front lines and shoot any comrade attempting to flee. In all, 158,000 Soviet soldiers received death sentences during the war. A 1942 German report on the enemy put it succinctly: "As a rule, they do not fight out of some ideology or for their motherland but out of fear of their officers, especially their commissars."

The second source of motivation, revenge, is something that few American readers can fully comprehend. We were attacked on our soil in 1941 and again 60 years later, but we have never experienced all the horror and humili-

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ation that a foreign occupation entails. As the war progressed, the soldiers grew more enraged by the sadism of their German adversaries. "The Fritzes" didn't merely capture Soviet territory; they murdered the civilians they found there, and laughed as they did so. (For a harrowing cinematic look at the Soviet experience of the German invasion, watch the 1985 Belarussian film *Come and See*, arguably the best war movie ever made.)

In the early days of the war, many troops had privately wavered, wondering if life under fascism could really be much worse than life under communism. But as the Germans sowed misery across their homeland, a steely new resolve took root.

Soviet payback would be gruesome. When the Red Army entered Axis territory, they launched what Merridale terms "an orgy of war crimes," particularly rape. (Many Tallinn residents refer to the controversial monument as "The Unknown Rapist," and when the Soviets were crossing Estonia they were just getting started.) The details Merridale presents are shocking. One Soviet officer wrote:

> Women, mothers and their children, lie to the right and left along the route and in front of each of them stands a raucous armada of men with their trousers down. The women who are bleeding or losing consciousness get shoved to one side, and our men shoot the ones who try to save their children.

According to this officer, a commander directed the whole scene "to make sure that every soldier without exception took part." In some German towns, nearly every woman was raped.

Merridale argues that these war crimes were encouraged by the Soviet government, which not only looked the other way at the mayhem but intentionally constructed among the rank-and-file an image of Germans as subhumans. The abundance of alcohol on German territory played a part, too. A soldier wrote to his family, "It is nearly impossible not to be drinking. What I am going through is indescribable; when I am drunk everything is easier." One gang left an empty wine bottle in the vagina of each woman they raped and murdered.

One of the most fascinating subplots in *Ivan's War* is the reaction of Soviet soldiers to seeing the West for the first time. Lest we forget, Stalin's USSR was the original hermetically sealed totalitarian state, North Korea times 10. Not only had the troops never been in the West before, but they also had been systematically denied any accurate information about it. Before they crossed into Romania in 1944 the only thing they "knew" of the West was that it was a sewer of poverty and corruption. What they found made their brainwashed heads spin.

"Such pretty houses," one veteran remarked. The prosperity of the farms in Central Europe stunned the peasants among the troops. In one of the book's many moments of poignancy, a veteran struggles to admit to Merridale the truth of what he saw that day: "The word for it is rich. The capitalist farms were richer."

Their glimpse of life outside the Soviet Union made the soldiers determined to improve conditions in their native country. Astonishingly, in 1945, Red Army officers began sending letters to Moscow demanding reforms: an end to arbitrary arrests, cultural openness, the return of farmlands to the people. But Stalin had other ideas. When the soldiers returned home, the country they had saved from fascism continued to treat them like dirt.

Woven into the story Merridale tells is a metanarrative about the obstacles historians face in trying to tell that story. From the war's inception, the Kremlin waged battle on two parallel tracks: military and optical. The Soviet propaganda machine wrapped every development into an ideologically correct package. The Kremlin drastically underreported the number of casualties. Merely mentioning the starvation in Leningrad brought imprisonment or execution. The first Soviet museum devoted to the war opened in early 1943, a time when resources surely could have been put to better use elsewhere.

Newspapers and films bombarded the populace with the same simple story of inevitable, glorious victory over the fascist beasts. Soldiers returning home were even forced to sign a sort of non-disclosure agreement, in which they promised, in perpetuity, never to reveal most of what they had experienced. As a result, even many of the veterans seem to recall only the war that they have been conditioned to remember.

This political culture of forgetting in Russia still surrounds the war, which helps explain the severity of the Russian reaction to the Estonian monument. What Stalin built, Brezhnev would embellish into what Merridale calls "a glittering and specious edifice of myth." For a brief period in the Yeltsin era, Russian pupils learned from history textbooks that chipped away at the myth, but in 2003, state officials pulled those books out of the classroom. And the Kremlin has just promulgated guidelines for new history textbooks, which describe Stalin as "the most successful leader of the USSR," virtually ignore his crimes against humanity, and offer praise for the current president in a style that can only be called Soviet: "We see that practically every significant deed is connected with the name and activity of President V.V. Putin."

To underscore the importance of this project for his government, Putin himself addressed a convention of history teachers earlier this year, admonishing them that Russia "has nothing to be ashamed of" and should "stop apologizing."

To those of us not reared on a fairytale version of the eastern front, it seems self-evident that the people of Estonia might have mixed feelings, to say the least, about a monument to the soldiers of a country that first colluded with Hitler to seize their homeland and then, after driving out the Germans, annexed it again and sent thousands of Estonians to die in the gulag. But for the most part, even 60 years later, the Russian people have never learned the truth about what the Soviet Union did in the Baltics.

If Putin has his way, they never will. ♦

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Brush with History

Painting was more than a pastime for Winston Churchill. **BY HENRIK BERING**

One million pounds for a landscape with some sheep, painted by an amateur artist, may strike some as rather on the high side; but that was the winning bid at a recent auction at Sotheby's in London.

Then again, the amateur in question was Winston Churchill, and the view that of his beloved country estate Chartwell in Kent. He had given the painting to Henry Luce, who had serialized his wartime memoirs in *Life*, and the price was no fluke: Churchill's paintings have doubled in value over the past decade, which would no doubt have pleased him. Painting was important to Churchill: "If it weren't for painting, I could not live," he once noted. "I could not bear the strain of things."

In his long essay "Painting as a Pastime," Churchill recounts how he took it up in 1915 at the age of 40 after being sacked from the Admiralty after Gallipoli. Demoted to a sinecure in the cabinet with no influence on the conduct of the war, he was sulking at a country retreat in Surrey he had rented for his family. Here he found his sister-in-law painting in the garden, and after experimenting a little with the children's paint box, decided to get himself some proper equipment.

Having acquired easel and colors, he describes his first timid steps in front of the canvas: "The palette gleamed with beads of color. Fair and white rose the canvas, the empty brush hung poised, heavy with destiny, irresolute in the air. My hand seemed arrested by a silent veto." But noting that the sky was pale blue, he proceeded gingerly to load a "very small brush" with blue paint and, then, "with infinite precaution made a mark about as big as a bean on the affronted snow-white shield. It was a challenge, a deliberate challenge; but so subdued, so halting, indeed so cataleptic, that it deserved no response."

At this point, the wife of his neighbor, the painter Sir John Lavery, arrives in his driveway in her car. She sees his hesitation, resolutely grabs a large brush and inflicts "several large fierce strokes and slashes of blue on the absolutely cowering canvass." And lo,

> No evil fate avenged the jaunty violence. The canvass grinned in helplessness before me. The spell was broken. The sickly inhibitions rolled away. I seized the largest brush and fell upon my victim with Berserk fury. I have never felt any awe of a canvass since.

From then on, painting was Churchill's favorite hobby and escape valve, a means of warding off depression, especially during the long periods he was out of office. Rather than watercolors, for which England has a fine amateur tradition, oils were his chosen medium, as they are more forgiving. You can recoup your losses in oils, whereas in watercolors, one slip and you've had it. Oils are also more robust in nature and, therefore, more suitably Churchillian.

The key quality needed for a painter who starts out late in life is audacity, Churchill writes: There is no time for the usual childhood preliminaries, in the form of lessons and patient excercises; you have to jump right in. That means shortcuts are acceptable. Acknowledging his weakness as a draftsman, Churchill sometimes resorted to the aid of a Magic Lantern, with which he could project a slide onto his canvas.

As to his influences, he admired Sargent, Whistler, and the French impressionists, whose work is "instinct with gaiety, and floats in sparkling air." He describes how, inspired by their example, he trained his eye, registering all the changing hues in a landscape, or in the tiny differences in the colors of the bricks in a wall.

Churchill's own style—or styles, for he had several, depending on which of his painter friends were around—is characterized by his delight in color ("I rejoice with the brilliant ones and am genuinely sorry for the poor browns") and the vigor of his brushstrokes.

Churchill's view of Marrakech (1933), presented to FDR (1943)

CORBIS

Henrik Bering is the author, most recently, of Helmut Kohl.

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This very exuberance is also his weakness. According to his close friend, the French painter Paul Maze, who tried to discipline him, he was in love with the very pigment itself:

> All I ever attempted was to simplify his method and reduce his means and insatiable appetite for colour. He would have eaten a tube of white he loved the smell of it so. With his brushes and paint, he forgot everything, like a child does who has been given a box of paints.

Characteristically, he saw painting in terms of fighting a battle, where the commander in chief, having surveyed the ground, enacts his battle plan. But sometimes the painting will "retaliate," leaving the commander "besplattered," and staring defeat in the eye.

Sir Martin Gilbert's delightful *In Search of Churchill* describes such an occasion, in France in 1932, when painting a woodlands scene with Maze and four of his colleagues, Churchill lost control over his colors. But reinforcements being at hand, he armed each artist with a brush and issued directions as to what he wanted done, managing to turn disaster into triumph.

Afterwards, he had it signed by all the participants.

As demonstrated by the Sotheby's sale, his pictures of Chartwell are especially prized because of Chartwell's importance as his sanctuary. He had acquired Chartwell in 1922, and "I must go down to Chartwell and assault a canvass" is a typical remark, especially in his Wilderness Years. Favorite motifs were the black swans on the lake he himself had created, the garden wall he had built at a speed of 90 bricks an hour, and the still lifes, notably the one he fondly referred to as his "bottlescape."

During World War II, Churchill produced only one painting. After the Casablanca conference, he brought Franklin Roosevelt out to Marrakech to admire the sunset over the Atlas Mountains. But again out of office, during 1945-51, he painted all over the world, often with Luce (and *Life*) footing the bill. The fierce light of North Africa and the brilliance of the Côte d'Azur had always captivated him. And from Italy, Gilbert includes the incident where he painted a house damaged by Allied bombs and was booed by the locals—afterwards admitting to a certain lack of tact. After all, he noted, he would himself have been "damned annoyed if Hitler had started to paint the bomb damage in London."

Alas, the most delightful of all the anecdotes about Churchill the painter Gilbert dismisses as apocryphal. In retirement, the Labour prime minister Harold Wilson, working on a book about his predecessors, wrote to Gilbert that he had come across an example of what he termed Churchill's "post-midnight activities." At Checkers, the prime minister's official country retreat, there is a huge canvas by Rubens, representing the lion from Aesop's fable all tangled up in a net and saved by a mouse patiently nibbling through the rope.

"Can't see the *moushe*," Churchill growled one evening, with his characteristic lisp, ordered up a ladder, and scampered up with his palette to confer proper stature on the rodent.

"It takes a confident man and authoritative Prime Minister to decide to touch up a Rubens," writes Wilson, adding that, regrettably, in a later cleaning of the painting, the old varnish had been removed—and with it, Churchill's mouse. Gilbert doesn't buy the story, claiming that Churchill was too much of an art lover to commit this kind of sacrilege.

Maybe so. But Lord Moran, Churchill's physician, records another middle-of-the-night incident when, staying at an industrialist's estate on Lake Como, Churchill decided that a picture of a sylvan landscape and lake needed a little extra zip. He got someone to wrench it loose from its socket in the wall, with plaster flying, and triumphantly abducted it to his bathroom/studio, where he added a glorious sunset and a host of highlights on the water.

Having second thoughts the next morning, he removed his additions with turpentine. But at least there are witnesses, on record, to this little adventure. ♦

Diary of a Nobody

Lonely child, cold mother, absent father, loving servant—yawn. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

The Nanny Diaries
Directed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini

Does anyone in America outside of Manhattan—and even inside Manhattan—care about the lives of aging WASP socialites who populate the grand old apartment buildings and townhouses along and between Park and Fifth Avenues? Once upon a time, the public lives of such people were chronicled in newspaper society pages and boldface columns in *Women's Wear Daily*, but those days and those columns are long gone.

It once mattered, in an indefinable way, who was on the host committee for this or that gala, but now such things matter only to those who aspire to them. The hoi polloi have moved on. Of far greater interest to everyone are the exhibitionistic children of privilege who straddle the increasingly narrow divide between High Society and Low Celebrity.

The problem for this remnant of

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the once-dominant WASP aristocracy is that it is notable solely for its wealth, and these days its wealth isn't especially notable. Not when there are hedge-fund billionaires and venture capitalists running around whose Sun King standards for opulent living are deliciously chronicled in Robert Frank's fine new book, *Richistan*. The chilly restraint of WASPdom, with its pursed lips and withering glances, is no match for the cheerful excesses of its successor culture.

And therein resides the reason that *The Nanny Diaries*, a new movie based on the 2002 bestseller, is proving to be such a dud at the box office. Like the book before it, the movie promises to expose the true nature of Upper East Side privilege, offering a staff's-eye view of the grotesque misbehavior of the rich and powerful. But the book proved to be a bit of a scam. More than a million people bought it and read it to find out the secrets, and I suspect most of them were as disappointed as I was by its banal portrait of living large. The unhappily married couple at the center of *The Nanny Diaries* don't seem anywhere near as rich as the parents who buy their repulsive teenage daughters $300,000 parties on MTV's *My Super Sweet 16*, and they don't seem to have or wield power—socially, financially, or personally.

What's more, the up-close-and-personal portraits of these people are so riven with cliché that they have appeared in dozens, if not hundreds, of books before *The Nanny Diaries*. Solipsistic Upper East Side mother? Check. Boorish and uninvolved Upper East Side father? Check. I remember first reading about all this when I was eight years old in Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (1964), which is a novel for children.

What was new in *The Nanny Diaries* was the outraged portrait of the nanny's mistreatment by her horrible employers. Our heroine is a recent college graduate of relatively modest means who finds herself spending a summer working as the nanny of a five-year-old boy. His mother is a self-involved harridan and his mostly absent father is a monstrous boor. Our nanny heroine is horribly mistreated, but can't quit because she cares about the little boy too much. The matriarch doesn't allow the nanny a single night off and forces her to perform all sorts of menial domestic chores having nothing to do with the care and nurturing of the family's neglected child.

The only *frisson* provided by *The Nanny Diaries* is a masochistic one: The poor girl is working for abusive monsters, and she only sticks around because the emotionally abused little boy needs her. That's pretty small beer, and I imagine that the book's readers have little interest in revisiting this world at the local multiplex. If ever a movie premiered with negative word of mouth based on its source material, *The Nanny Diaries* was the one.

Nicholas Art, Scarlett Johansson

THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

And that's too bad, because there's a lot of good stuff in this movie. It was written and directed by a married couple named Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini. They spent years making documentaries before they broke out in 2003 with *American Splendor*, in which they invented an entirely new approach to telling a real person's story in a fictional film and came away with the best American movie of the year.

Like *American Splendor*, *The Nanny Diaries* is told in an unconventional way, and that's the best thing about it. The directors decided to imbue the heroine, Annie (Scarlett Johansson), with an interest in anthropology, and have her open and close the movie as though she were Margaret Mead delivering a lecture on the Samoans—complete with full-size dioramas based on the famous ones at New York's American Museum of Natural History. Another inspired conceit is the Parents Society, a club where bitter, Botoxed matrons spend lots of time attending lectures on how to be good mommies—which means they spend even less time around their children.

I think Springer and Pulcini originally planned to structure the entire movie as an anthropology lecture punctuated and highlighted by repeated visits to the Parents Society. If they had done so, *The Nanny Diaries* would have been as offbeat and strange as *American Splendor* and maybe nearly as good. Instead, they chose (or were compelled) to downplay their original ideas in favor of a more conventional narrative, and the conventional narrative is just a glossy soap opera about a bad marriage, a mean boss, a neglected child, and a naive young thing caught in the middle.

There's some good soap opera here, notably a haunting performance by Laura Linney as the unpleasant mother and a chillingly feral turn by Paul Giamatti (the peerless star of *American Splendor*) as the awful father.

But there's also very, very bad soap opera—as represented by Annie the Nanny's tedious relationships with her mother, her best friend, and a nice rich boyfriend who was once a poor little rich kid like her charge. This is all made worse because of a really terrible lead performance by the talentless starlet Scarlett Johansson. Why anybody in Hollywood willingly chooses to employ this person is beyond me. (Woody Allen does, of course, but that's because she's 22 and chesty and he's 71 and repellent.)

The Nanny Diaries is a mess, but it's a very interesting mess, which is more than you can say for most Hollywood fare. But just as the WASP ascendancy had its moment, now past, so, too, did *The Nanny Diaries*. And its moment was five years ago, in print. ♦

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Paramount Pictures and toymaker Hasbro will team up on a live-action version of G.I. Joe, but the feature film will replace the traditional character's top-secret U.S. special forces team with an international co-ed force based in Brussels—and the name "G.I. Joe" itself now will stand for "Global Integrated Joint Operating Entity." The film's backers said they didn't want to distribute a film about the U.S. military when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Bush administration are increasingly unpopular in global polls. **——News item**

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